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PREMIER ISSUE
VOL. II, NO. 1

SPACE GAMER

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for Cyberpunk

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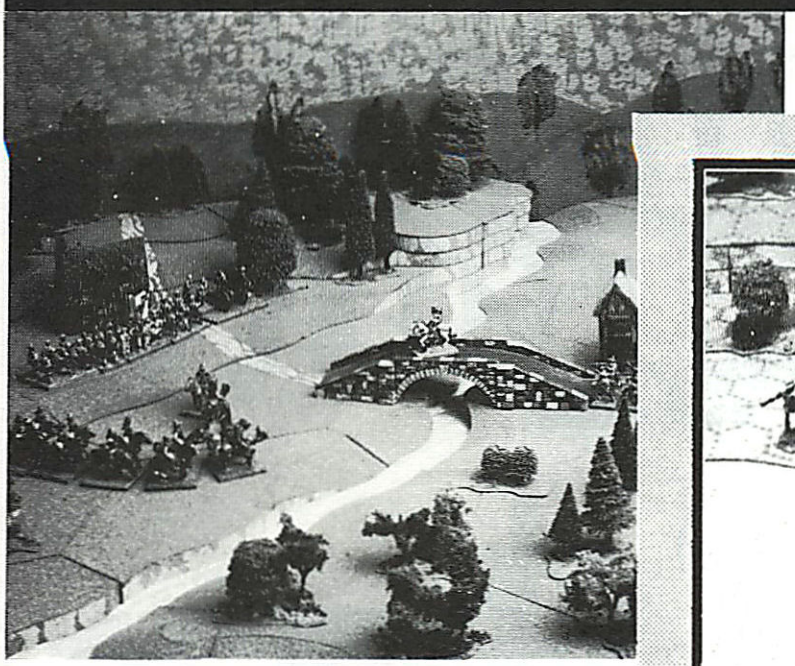

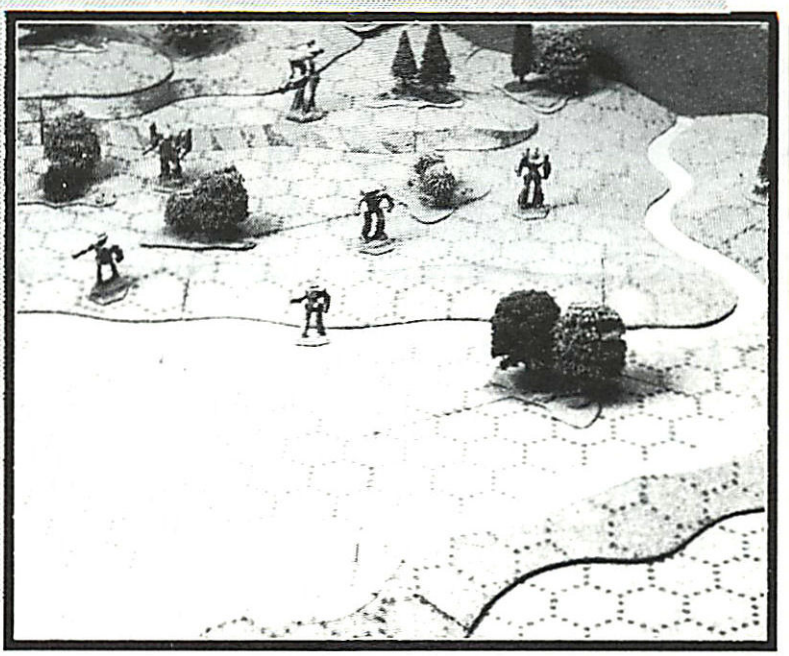

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SPACEGAMER

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Gary E. Smith

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Duty for the Empire calls!

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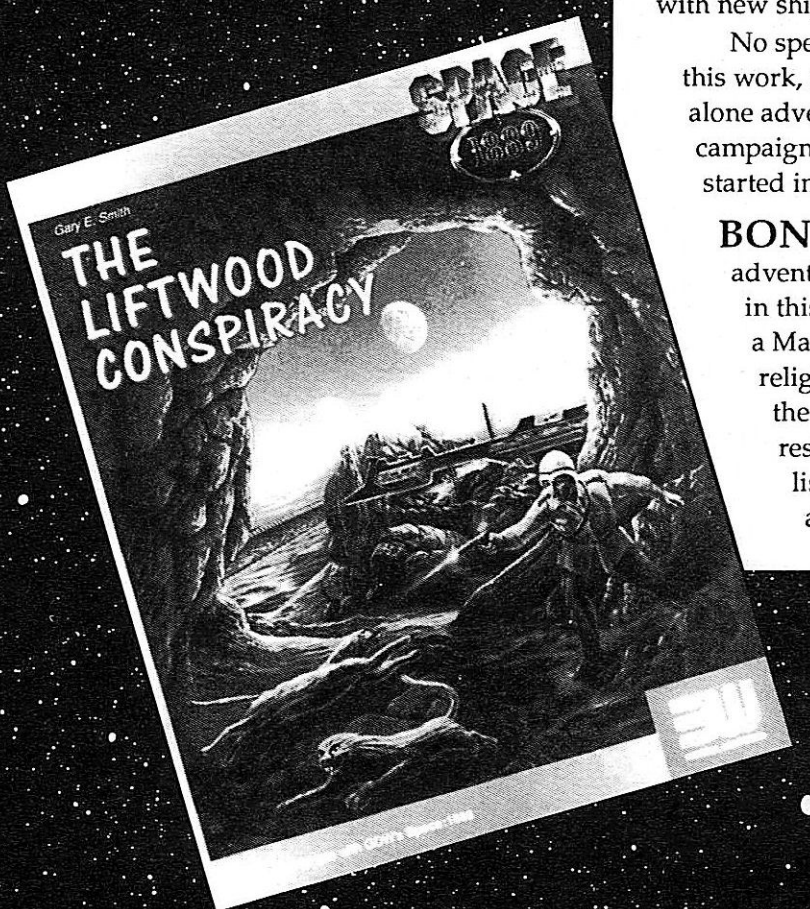
Cloudship combat is a feature of *The Liftwood Conspiracy* and the necessary ship charts and statistics for use either with the **Space: 1889** or **Sky Galleons of Mars** aerial rules are included, along with new ships to expand your fleet.

No specific date or year has been set for this work, so referees may run it as a stand alone adventure or add it into any on-going campaign. Either way, get your oconspiracy started immediately! The Queen so expects.

BONUS: *Rescue at Thoth,* a mini-adventure of derring-do, is included in this module. Can your players rescue a Martian noble from the hands of religious fanatics without turning the city-state of Thoth against the resident humans? If you can't, the list of sacrifices will grow, and grow, and grow .....



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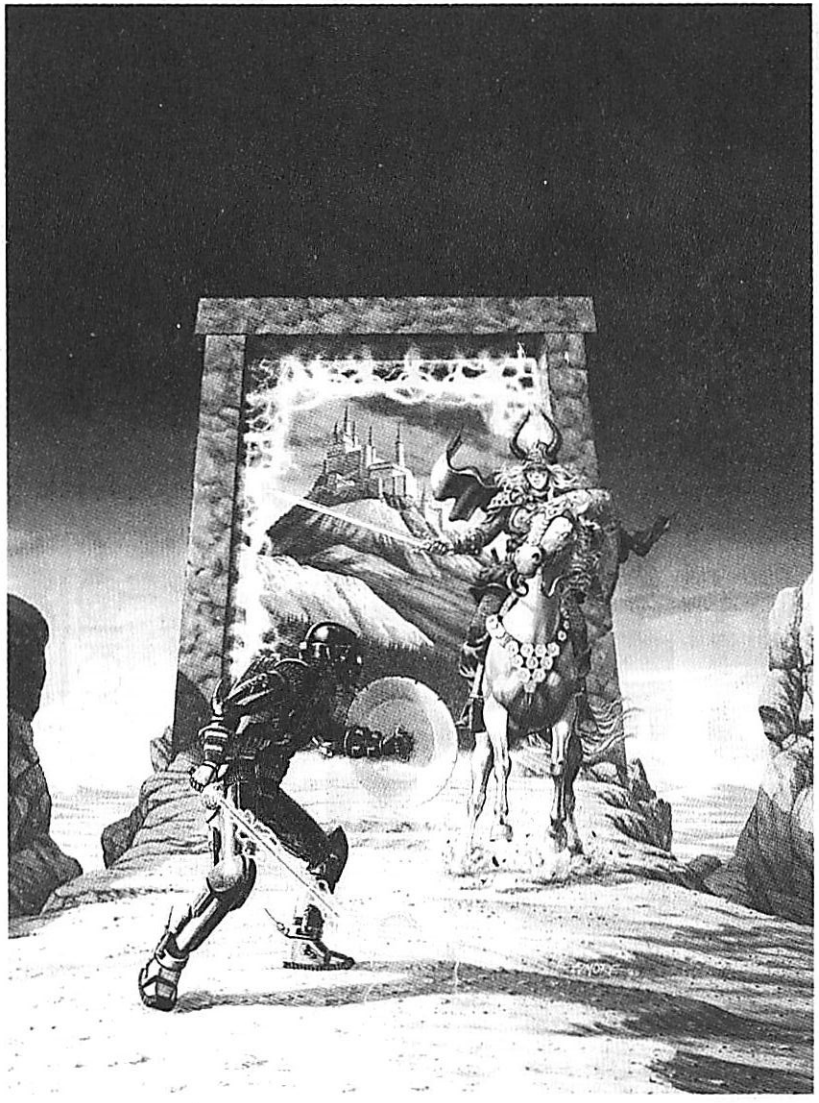

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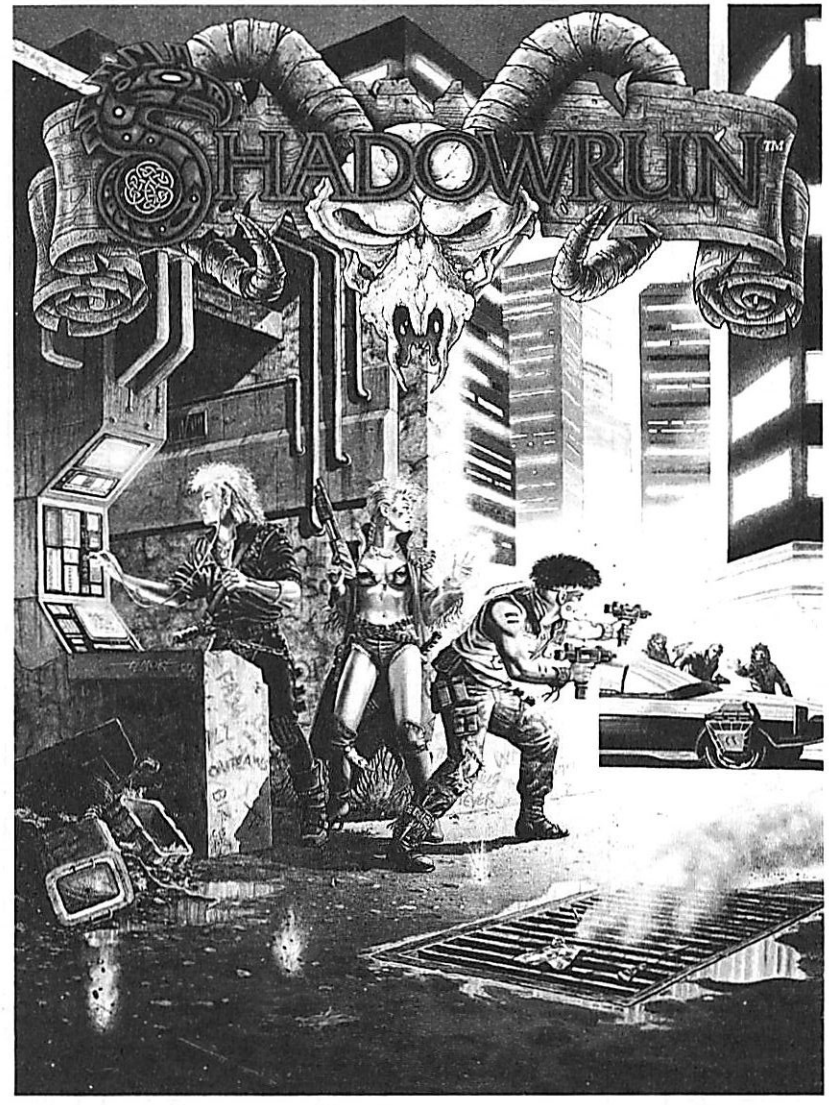

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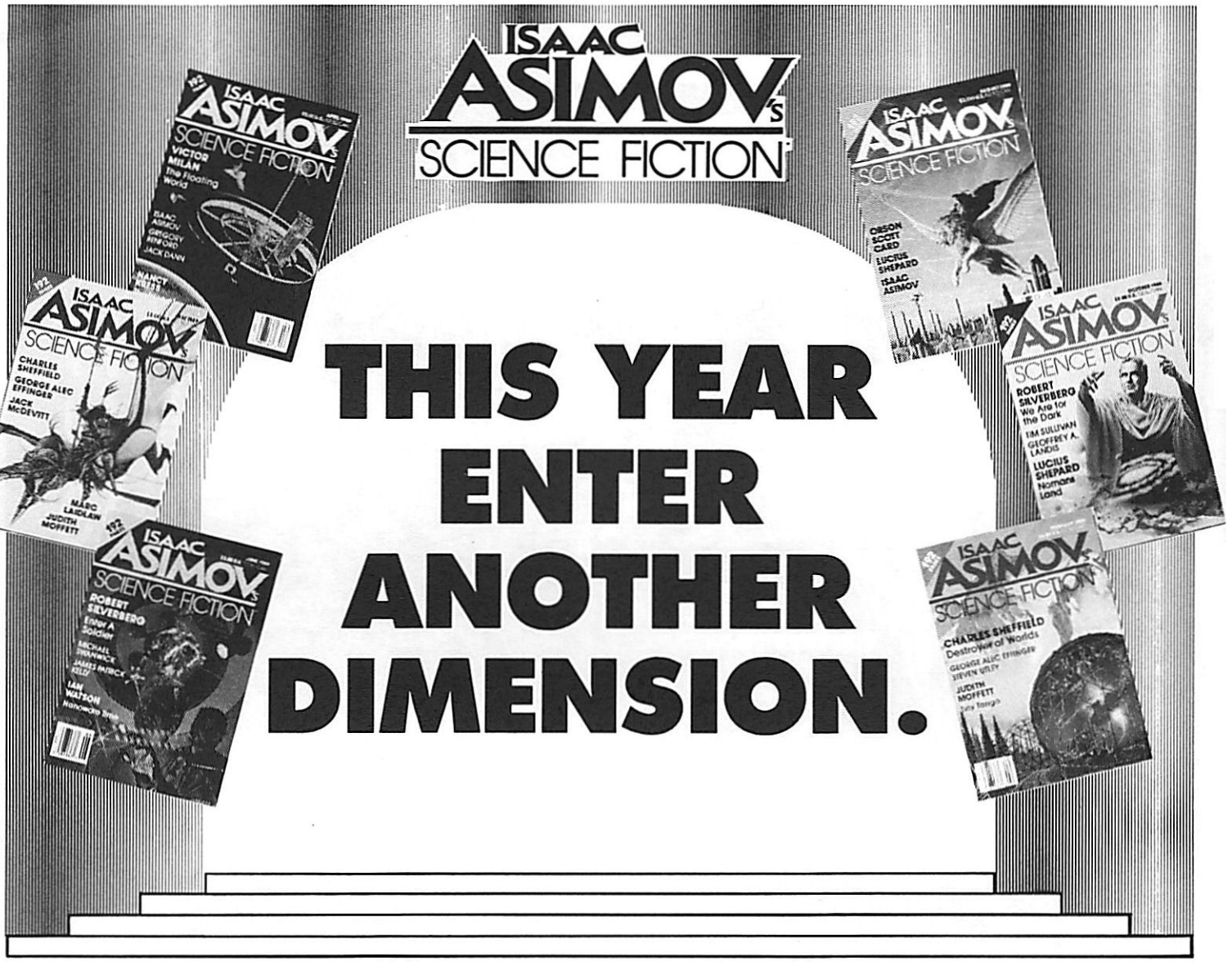

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Editorial

By Barry Osser
Editor

What is new? New is when something you come up with is different from its original to such a degree that it is unlike the original in all but the simplest cases. This is the case with Nanotechnology, a pet word for a new science and possibly one of science fiction gaming's greatest *New* discoveries.

The particulars are very simple. Two (isn't it always two?) scientists were researching on an electon microscope when a particularly annoying particle prompted them to try to rid their pickup of it. They sent a line of current down the scope and the particle stopped... Dead. After some time for reflection, the scientists realized that what they had done was to stop a single atom... Dead. Now what does this all mean? Well first, you should probably have your thoughts refreshed.

There is a thing in science called Brownian motion. Now this motion is a phenomena that has been noticed with all tiny particles. The motion is the tiny particles' apparent inability to hold itself still for even just one moment (kind of like a young child in a new toy store). There has been speculation for years that if you could hold atoms still, you could use them like building blocks to build whatever you wanted. Well, the two scientists' discovery allows this to be a potential reality. Only time will tell if this discovery will be followed up on. However, this does not stop the gamer from utilizing this discovery.

The neat thing about Nanotechnology and the reason why its potential discovery is so important is because of the incredibly vast range of things it can be used for. Nanomachines could be created. Big deal, right? We've already got miniaturized machines running around now, why do we need smaller ones. Well, when you wonder this, your thoughts probably do not grasp the incredible amount of miniaturization you're talking about. The term "nanotechnology" comes from to other words: Technology, which you should know by now, and 'nano-' which is 10^{-9} which is pretty small. You probably still have not got a really great grasp so let me let you know how small this is with some potential uses for Nanotech.

One of the ideas for its use is create cholesterol removing machines. The idea would be to inject the patient with a number of these machines that are small enough to not be noticed by the body's immune system (which would cause a degree of sickness the patient doesn't want). The machines would then roam about the patient's bloodstream, attacking and devouring cholesterol. The specifics of what the machine will do once it has some cholesterol is not too specific. It could convert the atoms into something or it could deliver them to the 'waste-chute' of the body and send them out of your body that way. Other potential uses would be to have these machines go around unclogging arteries that have packed up or to have it look for specific cells in the body (like cancerous cells) and specifically wipe them out of the body by some form of destruction.

Another idea is the possibility of seeding these machines into the atmosphere and having them either create ozone in the atmosphere by tacking oxygen molecules together, or help our atmosphere by destroying pollutants. Since the machine is nano-sized, it can destroy the pollutants atom by atom and rebuild these atoms as it is programmed to. If the right atoms were present in the pollutants, the machine could pull some apart and make water, and pull some others out to create hydrogen gases, or whatever. The possible uses for these little guys would be tremendous. They could be placed in 'hot', radioactively speaking, areas wherein they could create walls of dampening materials to reduce the radioactivity. They could be seeded into the ocean where they will roam looking for plastics, or bottles, or cans and will take these apart, atom by atom, and recreate what they will. There is even the potential that these things could build a person (if you wish to believe such 'outlandish' things).

The most intriguing use of these machines for me, however, would be their use in space travel. They could be placed and launched on a rocket to another planet with specific programming(we'll use Mars for this example). When they land on the planet, the first thing they would be programmed to do is to recreate themselves 1,000 times over with the atoms present on the planet. Then they could be pre-programmed, like our body cells are, to specialize. One subset of them would create oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, and the other trace gases we need to survive and create a simple atmosphere. Others would be set to the task of creating water. Still others would be specific to the task of building living space. This is where it really gets neat.

The city-building machines would be able to use the available atoms to build entire metropolises. They would build them from the ground up; and since they are building as they will, they could create the strongest material strengths in everything they build. They might create clear aluminum instead of glass, and steel girders many times stronger than what we use. They could be houses, shops, streets, lamps, and anything else in their programming. We could then launch our manned flights to Mars and arrive there with an already built Metropolis for us to inhabit. Think about it, it's pretty incredible. Now think about it for your space campaign...

What kind of ideas come to mind? You could have your intrepid adventurers arrive on a planet that has been terraformed and built by nano-machines. A proverbial ghost planet for them to fear (disease) or use (paradise). What if they move in and the architects of the nano-machines that built the place arrive to find the planet inhabited. There could be a reason for claim jumping

within a galaxy spanning game. Within a Confederation it would be possible to claim a planet that someone else was foolish enough to launch machines to, but not stake a claim. Now add in the machines in their body and you could have a family feud of internal length. Just food for thought in this, the new SpaceGamer.

On a final side note, how come if most 'new' discoveries in science happen "by accident" we, as students in science classes, get graded down for incorrect resultant products in chemistry or outlandish thrust/lift ratios for rockets in Physics? Does this make any sense to you?

By Jay Adan
Managing Editor

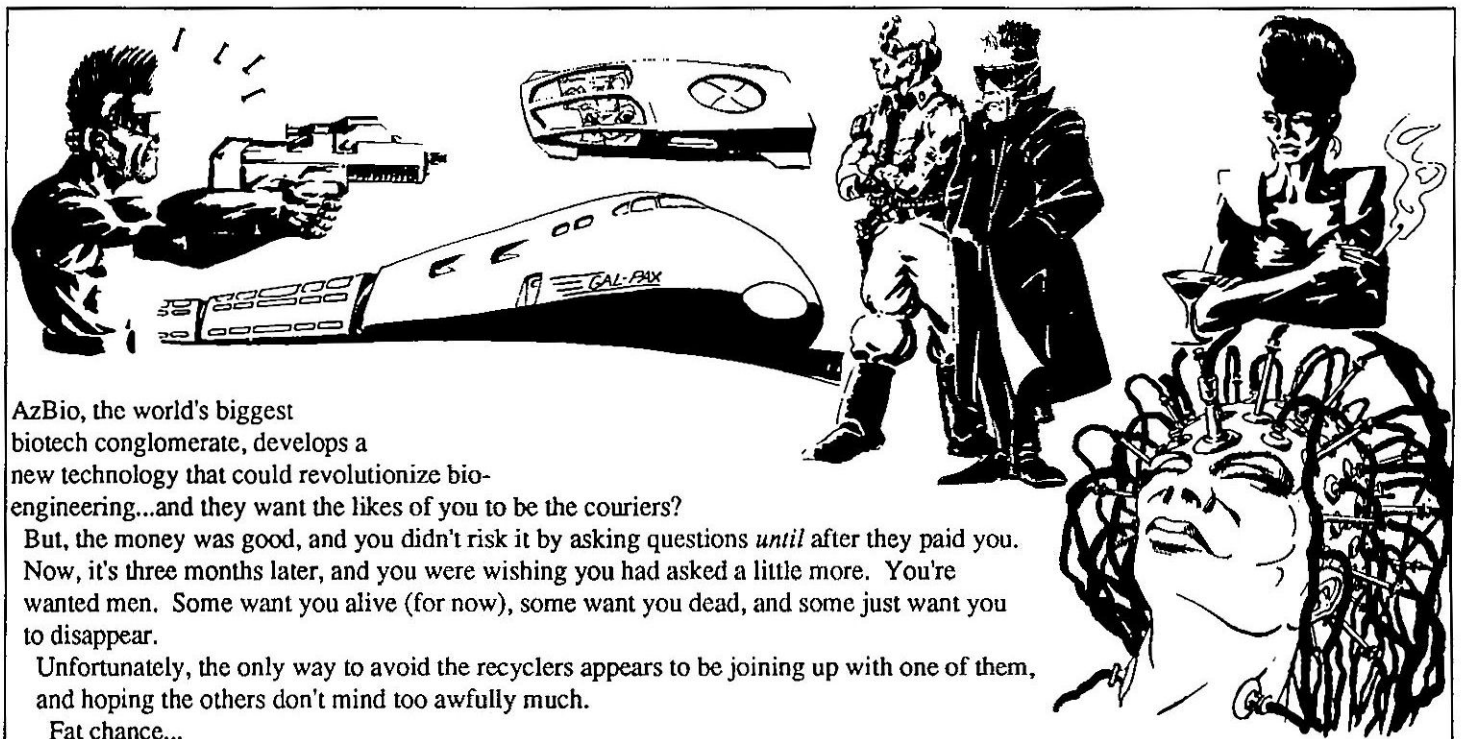
I had originally planned to open this editorial with a list of changes that have occurred in this issue of *SpaceGamer*. I changed my mind after realising that to anybody familiar with *SG/FG* the changes would be obvious, and to those unfamiliar the changes wouldn't make a difference.

So what is the point I'm trying to make? *SpaceGamer* is not the same publication it used to be. Not only has it changed, but it will continue to change as time goes by and we learn what it is that you want. This is your magazine and you have a right (if not a duty) to let us know what you like and don't like. You have an opinion and we want to hear it. Not only about articles or reviews but everything that makes up the magazine.

SpaceGamer has been around longer than any other role-playing magazine and has been through many changes, but it is now time for it to grow up and take its place in the industry.

I would also like to encourage any and all to submit articles for consideration. *SG* is a good starting point for aspiring writers. You need not have been published previously, and we will consider any articles that are in any way game-related. Reviews are a good place to start. Also try and keep the material current. If we don't think that there are a number of people out there who want to read about it, chances are we won't print it.

Finally I'd like to welcome you, our readers, to what seems to have become "The Next Generation" of *SpaceGamer*.



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Unfortunately, the only way to avoid the recyclers appears to be joining up with one of them, and hoping the others don't mind too awfully much.

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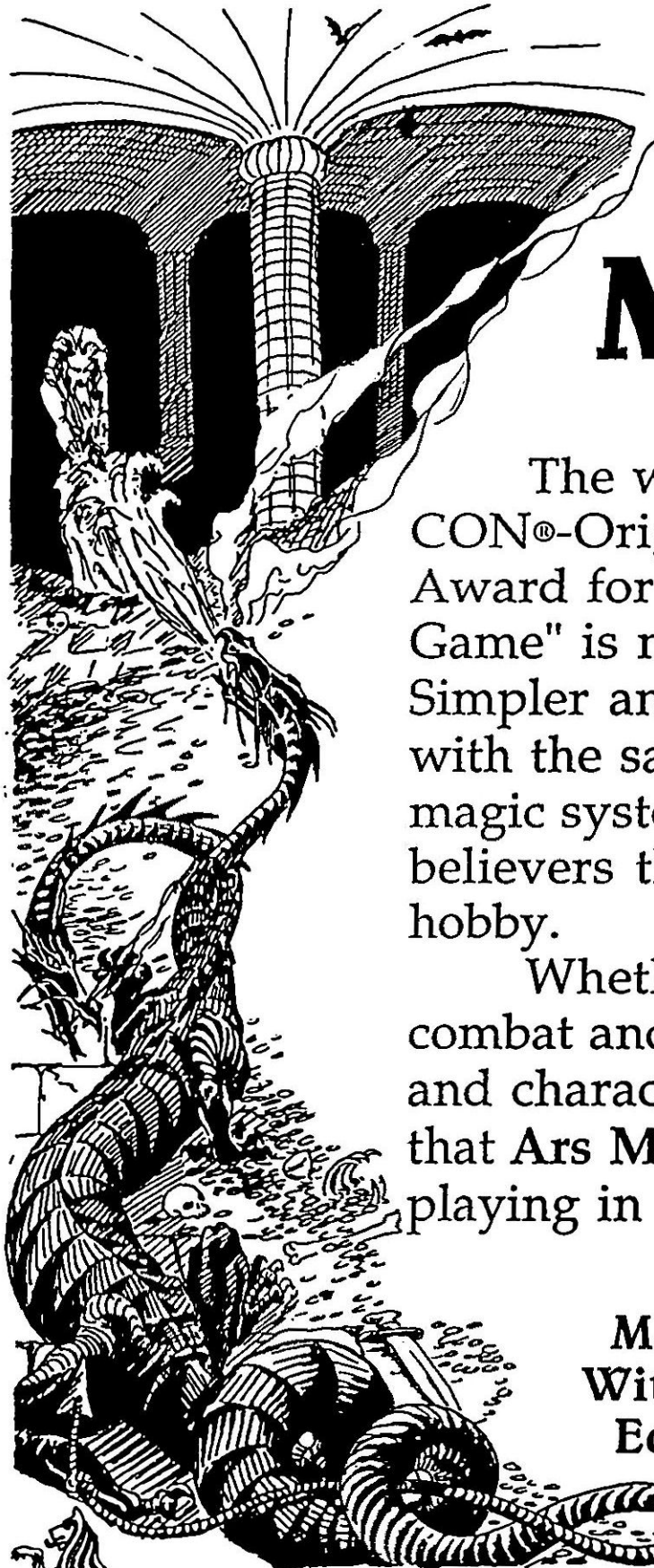

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CHAMPION

A Combat Scenario for GURPS

By John Sullivan

Learning the combat system in most role-playing games is a big job, and GURPS, by Steve Jackson Games is no exception. The players want to get to the meat of the matter, be it character role-playing or intensive monster bashing. They do not want to spend hours learning the game and any assorted sub-systems.

This scenario, CHAMPION, will provide the player and Game Master (GM) alike with a combat module that can be played immediately — once characters are generated for the players.

This scenario was originally run by the author at Origins '86, for the then released Man to Man combat GURPS system. It has been updated where necessary to GURPS Third Edition rules; and page designations refer to this edition. It is designed to be a fun introductory tool to GURPS combat. However, players who are very familiar with the combat rules will be challenged as well. This is not a scenario for the faint of heart...

CHARACTER GENERATION

Since this is a combat oriented scenario, character could be designed with only 100 points and no disadvantages. In addition, only combat advantages should be used, such as Combat Reflexes, Toughness, High Pain Threshold, etc. Advantages such as Charisma and Appearance will have no value in this particular scenario.

However, complete characters can be generated and run through this scenario as the beginning of an extended GURPS Campaign. Characters are built on 100 points, plus up to 40 points in Disadvantages and 5 points in Quirks. It is recommended that characters be no wealthier than Wealthy, and no poorer than Struggling.

The tech level for CHAMPION is Tech Level 3. Magic has not been written into the scenario and is not recommended. However, if the GM is willing to put up with the extra challenge, Mage characters could be used.

EQUIPPING CHARACTERS

The characters are each allowed $1000 to purchase weapons and armor. They cannot exceed this amount. Two characters cannot pool their funds. The entire amount does not have to be spent, but if the character chooses to carry the balance of his money, it should be counted against his encumbrance (see page B76).

Character can purchase any of the weaponry that is useable in Tech Level 3. For ease of player and GM, it is recommended that the players use the armor listed on page 2 of the INSTANT CHARACTERS quick reference sheet. If the character can afford them, fine weapons can be purchased. In no circumstances should magic weapons and items be allowed.

At best, for introductory play, a character should have a main weapon, a secondary weapon (such as a dagger), armor of some type and perhaps a shield. If they have a missile weapons, they should have at least 10 missiles for it.

Finally, no scenario of limited length can have an answer for every contingency, the players will continue to surprise and astound even the best GM — and this is part of the fun of gaming. If something should come up that is not covered by these rules, the GM should try to rule according to how **they** feel will best serve the scenario. They can ask for the opinions of the players or just judge it as best they can. The idea here is to learn and have fun with the GURPS combat — not argue rules or lack thereof.

BACKGROUND

(Read aloud to players)

You come from a land where petty fighting between Barons and Lords has gone on for over three hundred years. Life after life has been snuffed out in needless fighting. Bloodletting after bloodletting builds until entire baronies and holdings are wiped out to the last man, woman and child.

It is at this point that Kemlock, a wandering Sage and Wizard appears. He proposes a contest: each holding and barony will send their best warrior, contesting for the title of Champion. This Champion will then become the High Ruler over all of the scrabbling holdings. You have willingly given your word to fight for your holding and to serve whoever becomes... **Champion**.

Equipped and armored, you go to face the challenge.

Inside the Mystic Towers, you are brought before Kemlock — the High Wizard. He gives each of you a ring and orders you to put it on. If you do not put it on, or refuse, you find yourself back in your home, no longer a candidate for CHAMPION.

Kemlock tells you that there are at least FOUR trials before you. The ring will bring you through the gates which transport you from trial to trial. The ring will also restore you to full health upon passing thru the gates. But beware, the ring's healing powers are limited — do not depend on it to safeguard you from harm.

Kemlock begins to gesture and your eyes grow heavy and close. Then ... they open.

You stand with the other warriors before a hideous face carved into the very mountain before you. As you watch, the stone mouth opens in laughing grimace, a purple light radiates from within the mouth. The ring you were given also glows purple. As one, you move toward the glowing gate — to your destiny.

SCENARIO RULES

The following rules can be read to the players if the GM so chooses. If it is **only** a combat scenario, they should be read. If it is a role-playing scenario, the GM can choose which, if any, he will tell the players.

1) At this time, the GM should multiply each characters' Health Attribute by 4. This is the amount of HT the ring will regenerate for each character. This occurs **after** each trial. After passing through the gate, the ring will heal back as many HT as it takes to bring the character up to full HT. After a character has received HT X 4, the ring will no longer function. In any case, the ring WILL NOT heal a character above

their Beginning Health.

2) Should you drop, lose or break any of your weapons, armor, or any other gear in a room, you may use any available replacements (slain foe's weapon, armor, etc.). It is, however, unlikely that your oponent is willing to stand by and watch you spend five or more minutes putting on armor.

However, upon passing through a gate, your original equipment will be restored with the following exceptions: shot arrows, quarrels or other missiles, flasks of flaming oil, or any other gear you choose to discard (just tell the GM you want to drop gear and it will not keep popping up). If you do drop gear and change your mind, it will not return, it is gone for the duration of this scenario.

3) The winner is determined by totalling up the points a character accumulates in each room; through combat, successfully traversing throughout the room to the far gate, and by other means. The amount of points gained is indicated after each separate scenario description.

The character with the most points at the end of this scenario is the CHAMPION, even if they did not complete all of the trials.

If at the end of the fourth combat, one or more contestants are tied, then the GM should run one-on-one combat until one character has a higher score than the rest. In this last case, winning a one-on-one scenario is worth 1 point, plus 1 point for remaining uninjured.

Challenge 1 — The Water Room

The characters (PCs) are in a dimly lit cavern lit by moss growing on the cavern walls. The room is filled with standing water 24{" deep. This is up to the knee on an average human. Each water hex costs +2 to enter. Running more than two hexes takes a DX roll or the character falls down. No damage from the fall, but the character must then stand up taking a minimum of two turns (see page 103: Changing Position in Armor).

All combat occurring in a water hex is at -4, except for any thrown or missile weapon where the character takes a turn to aim.

Across the room are archers, as many as there are PCs. They will fire off as many crossbow shots as possible, (each will fire only on their specific target character) then change weapon to small mace. They will melee fight for two turns, then lower their weapons and surrender.

If at this point any character strikes any archer, the archer will die, regardless of HT remaining or amount of damage the attack delivered.

ARCHER (Point Total: 30)
ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 10.
Basic Speed 5.25; Move 4.
Dodge 4; Parry 6 (with Mace).
Wears Heavy Leather Armor: PD 2, DR 2.
Light Encumbrance.
Skills: Crossbow 13, Axe/Mace 12, Fast Draw (quarrel) 12.
Equipment: Crossbow IMP 1D+3, Small Mace CRUSH 1D+3.
Score Points —
Per Archer Killed: 1 point.
Character remained uninjured: 1 point.
Injured but conscious: 1/2 point.
Unconscious: 0 points.
-5 HT or more: out of competition.
Killing a surrendering Archer: -1 1/2 points (this is considered a dishonorable act).

At this point a mystical gate appears on the wall behind where the archers stood. The PCs can now continue toward the next challenge.

Challenge 2 - The Earth Room

Passing through the gate, the PCs find themselves in another cavern. The walls are dimly lit by a green fungus that seems to move, as if alive. The room is strewn with boulders; stalactites grown down from the ceiling.

The boulders hide Gnomes who wait for unsuspecting PCs to pass by. At this point, the GM should mentally place as many Gnomes as there are characters in the room. Spotting a Gnome takes a successful vision roll at -2.

The Gnomes will fight to the death. If they kill a character, they will simply move on to the next character until all the PCs are dead.

The PCs goal is to fight or escape the Gnomes and reach the far wall where the gate is (it is along the entire wall). The glowing gate can only be seen if a boulder does not block line of sight.

GNOME (Point Total: 60)
ST 13, DX 10, IQ 10, HT 10.
Basic Speed: 4, Move: 3.
Dodge: 3, Parry: 6 (Warhammer), 7 (fist).
Wears: Heavy Leather Armor: PD 2, DR 2. Total DR 4.
Light Encumbrance.
Advantages: Gnome 10, Toughness 10.
Skills: Two-Handed Axe/Mace 12, Brawling 11.
Equipment: Warhammer IMP 2D+2, Fist CRUSH 1D.
Score Points —
Per Gnome Dispatched/Defeated: 1 point.
Uninjured: 1 point.
Pass thru gate on far side: 1 point.
Unconscious: 0 points.
Negative HT: Out of further competition.

Upon passing through the gate, they reach the next challenge.

Challenge 3 — The Fire Room

The PCs are greeted by a bizarre sight. The entire chamber consists of a raging inferno that snaps and crackles with hellish intensity. The only means of passage are wooden suspension bridge with rope hand-rails.

On each bridge that contains one of the PCs, the GM should place a waiting Half-Orc spearman halfway across.

Fighting on a swaying wood and rope bridge is at -2. Every swing attack that misses or is dodged forces the attacker to make a DX roll (or Acrobatics, if they have that skill), at +1. If they miss this roll, they fall off of the bridge and down into the inferno, which obviously puts them out of any further competition.

Cutting Thru a Bridge

Should one or more characters choose to cut a bridge rope support, they may do so. Each support rope has a DR 9f 3 and 10 Hit Points. Each bridge has two support ropes. After the first rope is severed, the bridge slips sideways on the side which was severed.

At this point, each character on that particular bridge must make a DX roll at -1 to grab hold of the bridge. They must have a green hand to grab with. If they grab with a hand that has a shield on it, the passive defense of the shield+1, is the roll they must make to successfully brave the other rope rail. If they fail, they fall off... with obvious results.

Each hex of a bridge which has one severed rope rail adds 6 to the cost of the hex, a character can move one hex per turn

minimum. All fighting on a bridge with a severed rail is at -4.

if both supports are cut, all PCs on the bridge must make first a DX roll at -2 to grab onto the birdge itself. If unsuccessful, they fall into the inferno. If successful, they must then make a ST roll at -1, with a -1 for each level of encumbrance they have. If they fail this roll, they were unable to hold onto the swaying bridge and fall away into the fire.

If the rolls are successful, they may attempt top climb up the dangling bridge at a rate of 1 hex every three turns or one hex per two turns, but costing a fatigue point if they fail a HT roll.

Jumping

Any character can try to jump from one bridge to another. Each bridge is three hexes below (or above) the other bridge. Use the jumping rules on B88.

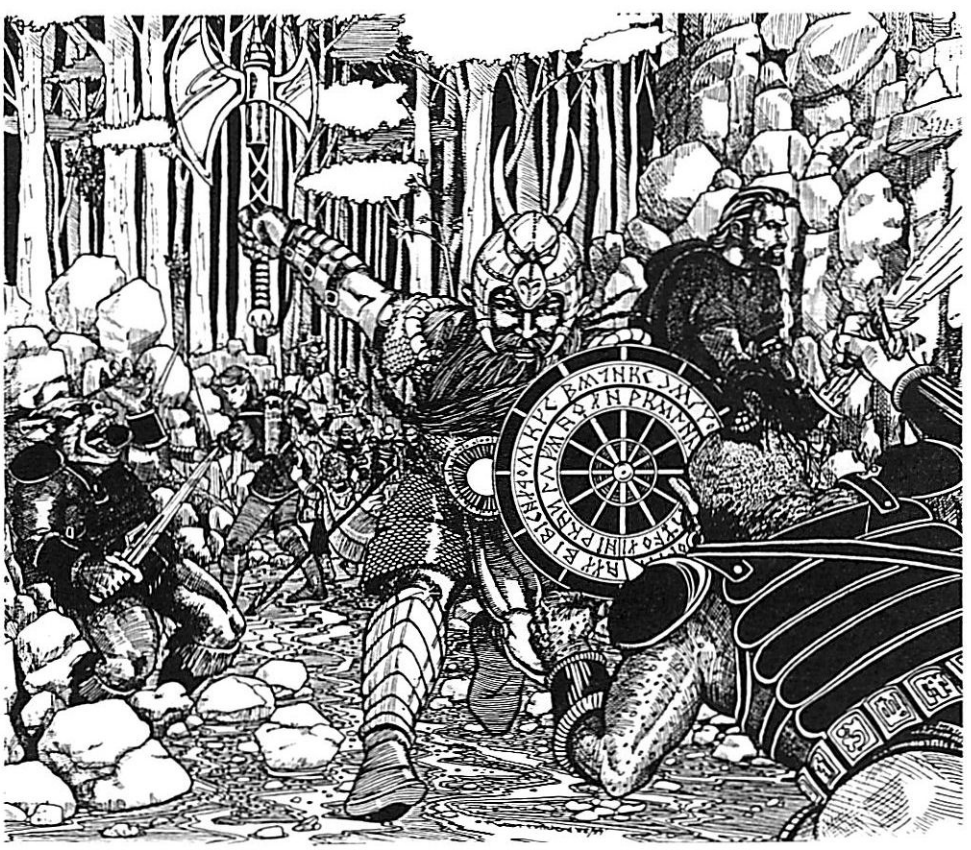
Any time a character jumps from one bridge to another, they must make a DX roll (or Jumping +1, if they have that skill), to grab either land on a lower bridge, or grasp the edge of a higher bridge. If they miss this roll and they were jumping up, they might land back where they started from if they can make a DX roll -1. If they were dropping down and another bridge is beneath them, they get a DX -2 roll to grab that bridge as they plummet past. If they catch hold, they must make a ST -1 roll (-1 for each level of encumbrance) to hold on. If these rolls are missed, they fall into the fire.

The Half-Orcs will not jump from bridge to bridge or try to sever the ropes. Their main concern is 'shish kebabbing' the PCs. They will pick a main opponent and attack until death results. They will then go after another character (if the other character is on the same bridge).

Goal

To pass through the fire pit, past the Half-Orcs, to the gate at the far side.

HALF-ORC (Point Total: 80)
ST 14, DX 13, IQ 9, HT 11.
Basic Speed 6; Move 4.
Dodge 4; Parry 7 (with Halberd), 8 (fist).
Wears Scale Armor: PD 3, DR 4.
Medium Encumbrance.
Skills: Polearm 14, Brawling 13.
Equipment: Halberd CUT 2D+5, IMP 2D+4, IMP 1D+3.
Score Points —



Per Half-Orc Defeated: 1 point.
Character uninjured: 1 point.
Character unconscious: 0 point.
Character Negative HT: Out of further competition.
Pass thru gate on far side: 1 point.

Passing through the gate leads them to the final challenge.

Challenge 4 — The Air Room

This time the PCs find themselves in an impossible (or highly unlikely) place. They find themselves high up in the sky, standing on floating disks or islands. The islands are stationary, they neither move, nor can they be tipped over, damaged, or changed in any way. In order for the PCs to move from island to island, they must jump (see jumping rules on B88).

On the large islands are human fighters with swords and shields. There are as many fighters as remaining PCs. The exit gate is obvious, on the island on the far left of the map (the PCs obviously enter on the right side of the map).

On the small islands, the only type of combat possible is close combat. Each turn any character fighting on these disk must make a DX roll or fall off. If a character falls off, they fall out of sight in the clouds far below.

Dodging on one of the small disks takes a DX roll not to fall off. Keep in mind how deadly a shield rush can be here — the human fighters certainly are, they will shield rush whenever possible.

Goal

Pass thru the final fate on the far side.

HUMAN SWORDSMAN (Point Total: 100).
ST 14, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 12.
Basic Speed 6; Move 5.
Dodge 5; Parry 6 (with Broadsword) Shield 6.
Wears Heavy leather armor: PD 2, DR 2. Small Shield PD 2. Total PD 4, total DR 3.
Light Encumbrance.
Advantage: Toughness 10.
Skills: Broadsword 13, Shield 12.
Equipment: Heavy Leather Armor, Small Shield, Broadsword: Cut 2D+1, IMP 1D+2.
Score Points —
Per Enemy Defeated: 1 point.
Character uninjured: 1 point.
Unconscious: 0 point.
Pass thru gate on far side: 1 point.

Conclusion

Total up the points each player character has. The one with the highest score (even if they did not finish the competition), is the winner... the **Champion**.

If two or more characters have the same high score, have them fight each other one-on-one. Use the bridge over fire map, placing the characters at least seven hexes apart. The combat begins. The magic regeneration rings no longer function. The winner is the character with the most points. If they still tie, have them fight each other until their is ONE winner.

Score Points

Per Opponent Defeated: 1 point.
Uninjured by end of combat: 1 point.
Unconscious: 1 point.
Negative HT: -1 point.

ROLE-PLAYING

If the GM chooses to use the above scenario as a role-playing segment of a larger campaign, here is the **rest of the story...**

Kemlock knew that the only way to choose the best Champion was to put them through a series of grueling tests. It was never his intention to see a group of potential contenders slaughtered, so to that end, this entire test takes place in the group mind of the characters. They have never left the tower, in fact, for the duration of this episode, they have not stirred from where they were, either standing, sitting or kneeling, waiting for the arrival of Kemlock with the information on how to contend in the Champion Contest.

At the end of this, the characters are awaken, informed of the subterfuge, and the Champion is announced. The Champion will now rule this series of feuding Baronies and Holdings. The character automatically gains a status of 7, (King). They will now rule — hopefully wisely.

The rest of the characters can stay on as knights, Status 2 (which they gain for free), or travel on. In any event, the player who is running the Champion now has a kingdom to run — with all its rewards and problems.

The rest is up to **you**!

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DOCTOR NIAV'S PAPERS

A GURPs Humanx Adventure

By Joseph Benedetto, Jr.

The Thranx was, to say the least, not visibly impressed.

"Look," Bren started to say, trying to fit it into Symbospeech, "this Doctor Niav was some kind of archeologist. He wrote this journal—"

"The journal that came in the box marked 'Garbage—chute it', which you got when you asked for a—" he stumbled over the word. "A take-out pizza?" The Thranx clicked at him.

"It's a common Terran food. Look Gebayunti, even a robot can foul up a delivery order." He caught himself. "The important thing here is the journal, not how we got it." He opened the journal, careful not to tear the faded computer paper.

"This Niav fellow was darting around the edge about 40 years ago, looking for remnants of some pre-amalgamation culture. One of the worlds he visited was Traasenks II, a Class V world about 225 parsecs away towards galactic center," added Bren.

"Interesting." The Thranx managed to express boredom, not an easy thing for a 4 1/2 foot insect to do. "Is there a reason why we should be interested in the late Dr. Niav or his unpublished journal?"

"Yeah, Bren, what's it got to do with getting us all here at this time of night?" Jennifer ran her fingers through her closely cropped blond hair. "I had ... something going."

"Just this." Bren flipped up an enlargement of one of the pages onto the wall. "This is his entry for Traasenks II. Look at that list: he found gold bracelets, irridium pendants, even plates of silver! I'll admit, he didn't turn up an Ozmidine deposit, but this stuff is still pretty valuable, even as material; I can't guess how much a museum might pay for stuff like this."

"A lot." Jennifer's eyes sparkled, then suddenly dulled. "But if that journal's 40 years old, how do you know anything in it's any good? That place could be a spaceport now for all you know!"

"Not likely." He fiddled with the monitor and brought up a United Church File Display. The monitor began droning on in the voice of some bored, underpaid clerk.

"TRAASENKS II. Class V world. Known statistics: Gravity .97 of Terranormal; Mean Humidity 54%; Diameter 7,386 miles." The voice paused, as if it were letting some great and amazing fact set in. "Planet is unexplored and unclassified as to flora and fauna, if any. Second survey ship never returned from mission. Planet is believed to be uninhabited, although potentially habitable." The file concluded with a listing of it's coordinates and a picture of the planet from high orbit: It was a cloud-covered ball with flecks of green showing through here and there. Not even Bren, for all his enthusiasm, could look at it and wonder if it were really a possible Eldorado; it certainly didn't look like one from orbit.

The Thranx was the first to speak. "Didn't this Doctor Niav bring any of this wealth home with him?"

"No, it seems that he was trying to prove a theory, not loot tombs and such. From what I've read, he wanted to leave the dig site as intact as possible. There were a lot of form rejection slips in the box with the journal; I guess he tried to publish the paper in order to raise his credibility and some money to outfit an expedition. No one wanted to publish the work, though." He turned off the viewer. "He died about 35 years ago. I looked it up at the Hall of Records. As far as I can tell, no one ever went back to Traasenks II."

The room fell silent. Bren was still not certain how they would go—for or against. He was certain that Jennifer would go, and maybe the Thranx as well; the Saia, Keltiir, was almost chafing at the bit. The thought of going off-world either doesn't bother him much, or (Bren thought silently) just hasn't hit him yet. As for the others, well....

"Young-feller-me-lad." the man at the back said in a booming voice, "I think you've gotten yourself a crew. Let's do it!"

Doctor Niav's Papers is a GURPS Humanx adventure for 3-6 100-point characters. It starts out in Brass Monkey, the Main Port on Tran-ky-ky, a Class IV-B world near the Orion Arm of the Commonwealth.

One of the players has obtained, accidentally, an old journal written by Dr. F'rel Niav, describing his acheological work. Using the information therein, the players are going to embark on an expedition to the unexplored world, Traasenks II, to recover the artifacts he discovered there.

Aside from the journal, the box contains the following items:

- a small triangular crystal
- a clear glass cube 4" on a side
- a small blue marble
- three necklaces made of obsidian
- a blank metal plate the size of a credit card
- a shuriken
- a pistol clip of tiny darts
- a combination screwdriver/knife
- a used filter mask
- several illegible notes on scrap paper.

Based on the description in the journal, the players can expect to make at least a small and tidy sum by recovering the artifacts on Traasenks II — if they can get there. There are no scheduled runs, but (assuming they don't have their own ship) they could ask around for passage. Captain John "Garfield" Jones and the Tramp Freighter "3 of a Kind" are in orbit around Tran-ky-ky at the moment; he will go almost anywhere, as long as they pay is good and it's not blatantly illegal....

Traasenks II

Seen from orbit, Traasenks II is a cloud-covered world without any moons. Few landmarks can be made out, but one major volcano — mentioned in the journal — provides a benchmark for the landing on-planet: the appendix of the book gives the exact landing coordinates where Dr. Niav made planetfall.

The LZ is a windswept valley high in the mountains. Little can be seen on approach; indeed, the landing will have to be on instruments because of the heavy fog. Just as the players make their final ap-

proach all instruments in their shuttle will be jammed by an unknown source, meaning a blind manual landing, (This is a roll against Piloting/Space Shuttle to prevent a sudden — and very rough — landing. Failure indicates a rough impact with the ground resulting in damage to the landing gear and wings of the shuttle; this will require a minimum of 3D6 hours of jury-rigging to make the shuttle spaceworthy again.)

Once down, the players will find that all of their electrical gear (scanners, sensors, computers) is on the blink; apparently scrambled or jammed by some unknown means. Due to electromagnetic interference, most Humanx energy weapons do not function correctly in this region: -7 to hit. The Dart Pistol, Electrocution Gun, Marker, Paxton V and most Archaic (non-energy) weapons are unaffected and operate normally. Neuronic Pistols and Paralysis Beamers are completely scrambled — when used, they backfire onto the*user*! Note that all of this will be unknown until the players run field tests or actually try to use the weapons.

As the wind picks up and the fog lifts a bit, the players will spot a 41' high stone obelisk. There is little to note about it, although if anyone is attempting to operate an electrical item, they may note that the static and jamming increases as they approach the obelisk (IQ-3 roll). Examining the obelisk itself will not show why it is jamming electromagnetic radiations: the party would have to pound it to rubble to locate the one-inch-square plastic cube imbedded within which contains the electromagnetic jammer.

Because of the heavy fog in these mountains and the intermittent winds, exploration will be somewhat hampered, especially since all sensors and radios are blacked out in the vicinity of the obelisk. If anyone makes an IQ-5 roll (Alertness and Acute Vision help) they will spot either (02-06) a cave in a nearby hillside, or (07-12) a second obelisk between one and two miles away.

The cave appears to be normal, although a successful roll against IQ or Geology will show that it was originally man-made and has since been obscured by time, mineral deposits, etc. If completely investigated, it will lead down into the ground for almost two miles before ending in a cave-in, which completely blocks the tunnel. The shaky condition of the last 200 feet of the tunnel precludes any attempt at cutting or blasting through the cave-in. Attempts to remove the blockage by hand are possible, but removing the debris, shoring up the tunnel roof and removing rock from new roof falls would take over a year.

Investigating the second obelisk will show (if electronic gear is present) that the electromagnetic jamming effect is constant between the two obelisks and falls off when one moves away from them — except in one direction. If the players haven't figured out that this is a form of directional beam, then the fog rolls back some more to reveal a third obelisk almost four miles away up the ridge. It is similar to the first two obelisks in all respects, including the jamming effect.

There is a line of these stone obelisks, almost 35 miles long, leading off across the ridges. Although Dr. Niav mentions one obelisk (or maybe two, it's not too clear), he does not mention a *line* of them. However, the journal is rather ambiguous in areas. Following the obelisks will take time, though: if the party has a skimmer, it cannot fly above 50', nor move faster than 20 mph safely. Going above these limits will mean making a PILOTING skill roll *every minute* to prevent the skimmer from being swept into the ground or some other large, immobile object hidden in the fog! Failing such a roll will result in a crash, or (if you prefer) can mean that a violent maneuver thows something—or *someone* — from the skimmer to the ground below....

Surprise!

Sometime after the party has been traveling for a while, say around the 20-mile mark (when everyone has gotten careless and tired of the fog and endless obelisks), they will come into a momentary clear spot and come face-to-face with a party of Ursoids (bear people) wearing archaic armor and carrying primitive weapons; if the players are riding a vehicle, then the Ursoids are mounted. Once the two parties have seen each other, the Ursoids will attack, a typical reaction of many "primitives" when confronting the unknown. The Ursoid party will outnumber the PC's 2-1; although the players have technology on their side, those arrows, spears and things *can hurt them*!

The Ursoids are a mixed group, mostly brown-furred bears with a few black-furred bears thrown in. All are wearing Scale Mail armor and have helmets. If a white-furred Scout bear is with the Ursoid party (50% chance), then he is wearing Heavy Leather armor and is equipped with a pike. For individual weapons, consult the following chart (2d6):

2-3 Thrusting Broadsword & (Medium) Shield
4-7 Spear and (Medium) Shield
8-11 Long Bow and Arrows (no shield)
12 Quarterstaff (Bearer w/sack of provisions)

It can be assumed that each Ursoid also has either a dagger or a hatchet for self-defense. Any Ursoid with a shield will also have self-igniting oil flasks (see sidebar, p. B113 in the basic book for details on oil flasks). If mounted, each Ursoid will be riding a huge, ape-like animal which appears to be domesticated like the Terran horse.

Standard tactics apply here: "knights" will charge; bowmen will fire a round over their own fighters' heads and then withdraw to continue firing; bearers will withdraw with the bowmen and not fight unless engaged, etc.

So, fighting breaks out. However, the thick fog will swirl in again, making it easy for friend and foe alike to lose each other in the mist, even if they are all on foot. Also, the Ursoids — once given a full demonstration of Commonwealth technology like skimmers, beamers, and so forth — are likely to decide that discretion is the better part of valor and will withdraw into the mist to regroup. On the whole, the players should be surprised by the outcome of the battle: jammed electronics, beamers that don't work right, sentient bears, flashing swords, hurled spears,arrows falling from the sky, and sudden bursts of flaming oil (are they in an open skimmer?) should be quite disconcerting to players used to relying on sheer technology to win them battles!

Details

The Ursoids are basically similar to the description given for bears on p. B137 in the sidebar, except that these bears are intelligent. They live in small city-states and fortresses scattered along the lower foothills and plains below these mountains. At the moment, their party is busy tracking down a *Gutraal*, a huge monster that has been terrorizing the outlying villages in the foothills. Due to the recent murder of King

Domont, there is civil war in this region and this small band is all that could be mustered to track down the monster as it retreated into the mountains. There is some doubt amongst them that they will be able to kill the Gutraal, but they are brave and loyal and are willing to try.

In general, the Ursoids are a TL 3 race and are going through a medieval period similar to that on Terra during the Middle Ages (c. 1100 A.D./-1300 Amalgamation). The majority of their race are brown-furred, with a minority of black-furs amongst them. There are also a few, rare white-furs scattered throughout the upper mountains; these nomads are occasionally hired on as guides and scouts by parties of adventurers.

Gutraal. Large, six-legged mammal covered in greay-black fur; has exceptionally sharp claws. Size: 50 feet long, 20 feet high. ST 700, HT 34/70, DX 16, IQ 5, Move 7. Hide has PD 1, DR 2. Attacks by slashing claws (1+4 impaling damage) and trampling (6 dice damage per turn!). Anyone clawed by a Gutraal will be poisoned by a blood agent that is secreted on the claws; the poison is effective within 3 hours from the moment it enters the bloodstream. Effects: *Insectoid Races:* reduces DX by 1 point per turn to a maximum reduction of 15 points. Roll HT-5 to resist. *Mammalian Races:* causes blindness in most species within 9 hours. Roll HT-2 to resist. If resisted (insectoids) poison causes severe nausea lasting 2 dice hours; (mammals) poison causes mild (1 dice hours) blurring of Vision (all Vision rolls at -1 penalty). Ursoids have a cure for this poison, but the ability of the PCs to obtain it is up to the GM!

The Temples

After the PCs have traveled the length of the obelisks they will come out into an open valley: at the far end are the temples described in Dr. Niav's journal. Anyone with ARCHEOLOGY or HISTORY will recognize it as being TL 1 construction and design, lower than that possible by the Ursoids already met. It appears to be quite like the temples constructed by the Mayans or Aztecs on Terra, or the moon temples of the Chyl or Eurmet. There is a long, high staircase leading up the front face of the pyramid to a structure on the top. Climbing the stairs is the equivalent of climbing up to the top of an 11-story building, so it will take some time and effort for the players to reach the top. At the top, an open platform with a crumbling firepit leads into the main floor of the temple itself.

Main Floor

This is an ancient, stone structure with a very high ceiling with a pillared entryway. Inside, the PCs will spot:

1. High Altar. This stands in the rear. The walls are old and crumbling, but the altar itself is relatively intact, being made of polished granite. Investigation will reveal a panel in the back of the altar which can be opened; inside is a hand-sized white lump with a pull tab, and a jeweled baton with a knob at one end. Twisting the knob seems to have no effect. If the white lump is activated, it turns a bright orange and swells up to a ball the size of a portable catalytic heater. Depending on what race handles it, it will smell like flowers or some kind of food. However, it is not edible — in fact, it will take the rust right off a skimmer's bottom!

2. Well. This is a crumbling well, which still has water in it. Exploring it would be risky, maybe even stupid, but any Archeologist will know that valuable objects were often cast into such wells as gifts to the gods. Such an exploration would require lowering someone into the deep water below (DX-4 to not cause a partial cave-in of the walls) and would require working in pitch-black ice water to locate anything of value (IQ-3 per five minutes to recover some small object, such as a gold circlet or irridium bracelet).

3. Statues. These ancient statues are of Ursoids, wearing primitive clothes. They *may* have had jewels embedded in them at one time, but these are long gone now.

4. Alcoves. These three alcoves are filled with scattered rubble, dead wood and trash, including broken pottery, rotten straw mats, and a few tattered plastic food cartons, dating back over 40 years. If the alcove with the (*) is thoroughly searched, a thick wooden grate will be discovered set into the floor here. Light shown down through it will reveal stairs leading downward. The grate can no longer be removed, but a combined ST of 30 or more may be able to smash through it. Due to the high humidity here, the wood is very damp and cutting through it with a beamer will take twice as long an normal. The stairs lead down into complete darkness (area 11).

5. Stairs Upward. These dual staircases lead upwards and, though rickety and damp, are sturdy enough to support a combined ST of 40 before collapsing, although they will make a lot of creaking noises no matter how many/few people are on them.

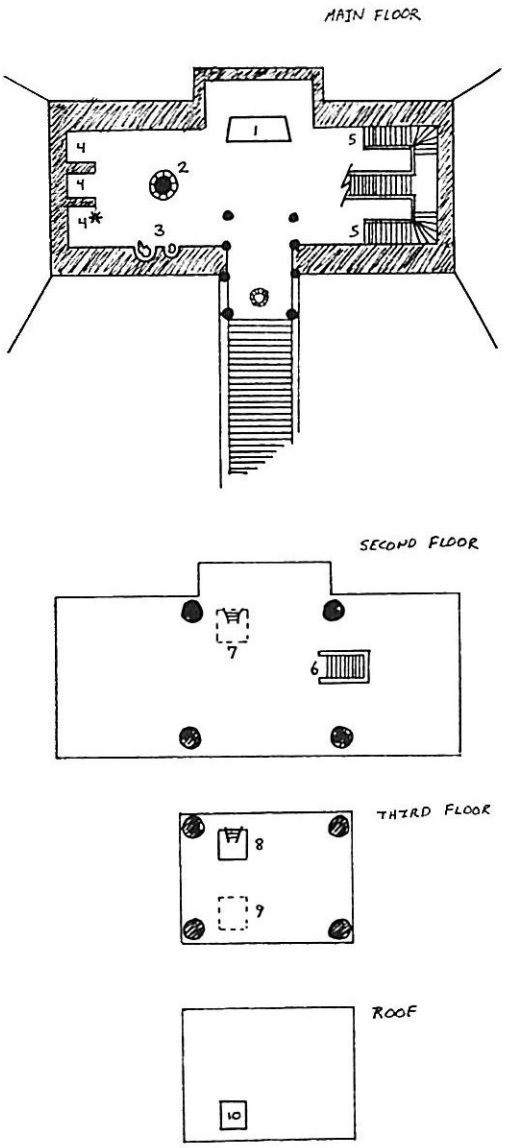
Second Floor

6. Stairs Down. The opening is railed, but it is weak; the rail will give way if more than 90 pounds is placed against it. Four stone pillars hold up the next level, and a shaky ladder (7) reaches up to there. This entire level is open-sided, and some junk— rubble, mats, etc. — covers the floor.

7. See #6.

Third Floor

8. Ladder Down. This entire level is similar to the second floor. There is an opening in the ceiling, but the ladder is long-since fallen apart; the opening is 4 yards overhead. The only thing of value



here are a few corroded silver rings on the floor. Through the overhead opening (9) open sky can be seen.

9. See #8.

Roof

10.Opening. Coming up from the third floor, this opening comes through the wooden, windswept roof of the structure atop the pyramid. Scrounging through the junk here will produce a tiny, plastic ball. Once touched by bare hands, it will produce a mental image of a pastoral valley, complete with huts, Ursoids and open fields. Shaking the ball (even accidently) will erase this memory, but makes it possible to "implant" another memory from the current holder of the ball.

NOTE: If there is more than a combined ST of 20 on the roof, it will give way, dumping the characters 4 yards onto the stone floor or occupants of the third level.

Under The Temple

11.Stairs Down. These lead down into the pyramid.

12.Open Room. Pitch-black; artifical lights will be required. The walls are faded mosaics, now barely visible. Some sort of moss clings to them.

NOTE: This deep within the pyramid, the electromagnetic jamming effect of the obelisks is lessened considerably. Weapons function normally down here; sensors and other gear function 80% of the time.

13.Altar. Identical to the one above, but empty.

14.Door. A gigantic, circular door of some kind of synthetic alloy. In the very center is a triangular depression. The triangular crystal found in the box containing Dr. Niav's papers will fit this opening, if anyone things to try it. Otherwise, the door must be cut through, a long, slow process. Using the crystal will open the door, revealing the corridor beyond.

15.Dark Corridor. Made of the same strange metal alloy, this corridor is completely dark. The moment anyone steps into it though, a hidden relay will trip and the entire area will light up from panels in the floor and ceiling (no doubt startling trigger-happy players!). At the far end is a door identical to the first one, down to the triangular depression. However, the moment anyone comes within 14' of it, a green wall of light will come up (17), keeping the door from being touched and preventing the key from being inserted. Near the barrier is a wall panel (16.)

16.Wall Panel. This panel has only one opening, a small slot to one side. A myrid complex of circuitry and wires can be seen through the translucent panel, but here are no buttons or levers.

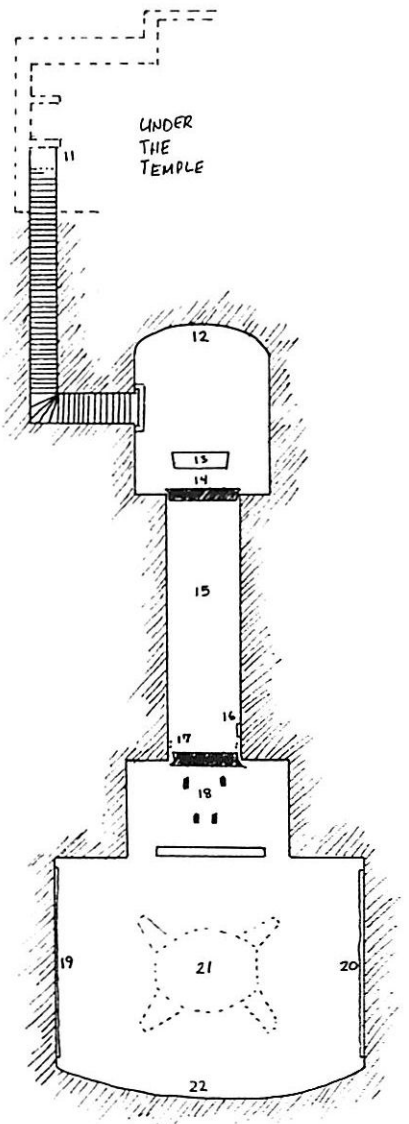
Players may attempt to insert or use the featureless metal plate found in the box containing the journal. This is a waste of time, as the plate is not even from this world. However, players often waste much time here trying to outsmart the situation, even when it is plainly hopeless. Let them. Note that there is nothing that prevents anyone from shooting or smashing the panel; if this is done, then the barrier phases — blinks on and off at random intervals.

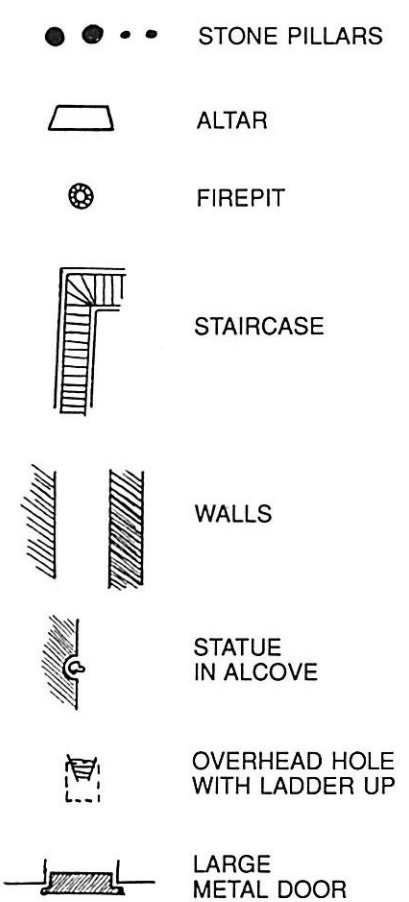
17.Green Light Barrier. This is a force barrier; contact results in 1 dice of shock damage as well as repulsion away from the field. Objects thrown/projected at the barrier will be repulsed back to launch point; energy (including most types of weapons fire) will be absorbed; this includes the fire from Neuronic Pistols and Pulsepoppers. If the barrier absorbs in excess of 50 points of energy it will explode, doing 4 dice of damage to everthing within 25 feet.

If the barrier is phasing, it will stay ON for 1-6 seconds, turn OFF for 1-6 seconds, etc. A PC may attempt to insert the triangular key between phases — this requires a roll against DX-4 to be successful.

18.Scanner Room. Once the door opens, whether the barrier is off or just phasing, the PCs will be able to see into a lighted room containing a few heaps of decayed debris; suspended from the ceiling are four cameras, all pointing at the party.

These are actually laser scanners; once the door has been breached, the computer controlling them will overload three





of them to shoot pulses of laser light at the players. (One scanner will be reserved to direct the fire.)

The pulses are as a standard Beamer/ Laser Pistol. However, because of the electrical overloading, each firing scanner has a 1 in 6 chance of burning out, +1 for each shot fired. The computer has the equivalent of Beam Weapons skill at a level of 12; due to the focal depth of the scanners, targets at Point Blank range are bonus 0 to hit; targets halfway down the corridor are +2 to hit, and targets firing from area (12) are at +4 to hit. (Meaning that characters who run away are *easier* to hit than those who stand still and fight!) If the players overcome the laser defenses, then the computer (buried deep in the bedrock far below the pyramid) will have nothing left to stop them with.

19.Hologram. This faded holo-image shows a star system with two suns, as seen from an ice-covered world. It does not match any known stellar configuration in the Commonwealth.

20.Hologram. This faded holo-image shows a view of a city on an icefield beneath a magenta sky. Again, no particular world comes to the players' minds.

21.Large Gizmo. *If anyone looks up at the ceiling*, he well see a huge electronic gizmo mounted up there. It is a large colored plate with projectors, heat sinks and other neat things attached to it. Lights at the edges are flashing, and change color or blink differently at different times. (Be descriptive: the players will never find out what it is for, but it lends itself well to paranoia and lots of inventive guesswork!)

22.Lockers. This entire wall is composed of lockers quite similar to those found in spaceports for holding luggage, etc. (Each one is coded to open to a spoken phrase, and thus are impossible to open, the players will have to cut or blast each one open. Using a beamer to cut through a locker door will take 1-6 x 5 seconds. Roll 1 die, on a 1 there is something in that locker. Choose from among the following:

1) Three Memory Crystals. All have simple memories in them showing picturesque views. As with the one on the roof of the temple, these can be erased if shaken.

2) A small box, about the size of a hand grenade, with a button on one end. Pushing the button causes the box to whistle, growing louder each second (tell them it's like a beamer going into overload!); the whistle grows louder for six seconds and then stops. There is no reason for this; obviously a strange, totally alien gizmo.

3) Several necklaces of native design, made of rare metals.

4) A knife of unknown alloy.

5) A box-like device with a small knob on the rear which can be hand-held and conceivably aimed at a target. There is a definite trigger, but no visible barrel, muzzle, projector, gunsight, or other thing to indicate if this is a weapon or what. The knob has six evenly spaced lines engraved on it and will rotate, but there is no way to determine what any of these mean.

GM NOTE: This weapon still functions, roll dice to determine the current setting:

1. SAFETY. Weapon will not function in this setting.
2. Device projects an invisible beam at a single target up to 71 feet away. Beam creates a mental image in the target of whatever the target finds the most frightening. Target must roll against IQ: a successful roll means the target flees in terror; a failed roll means the target drops dead from heart failure (literally scared to death). The weapon will not function against non-living targets.
3. As #2, but the weapons subjects the USER to the mental attack!
4. As #2, except that the device creates a 35-foot-deep field affecting all creatures within a 180° zone in front of the user. A successful roll means that targets are only warded off; failure results in the targets fleeing in terror.
5. As #4, except that the field is BEHIND the user.
6. Combines both #4 and #5 to create a 20-foot-deep field completely encircling the user who remains unaffected.

NOTE: The device has a flat 1 in 6 chance of shorting out each time the trigger is pulled. If that happens, then the results will be as if setting #6 is ON, and then after 2+2 dice seconds the entire unit will explode for a 4 dice blast.

6) A jeweled medallion obviously worth lots of money. If anyone puts it on, it will increase ST and DX by 1 dice points. (This is a mental illusion created by the medallion, which is a form of psionic device. It has no actual effect, save for the illusion.)

7) A triangular crystal similar to the one found in the box containing the journal. It too acts as a key.

8) A bracelet. Once put on, it cannot be removed by any means short of damaging the wearer's limb. However, it will glow a bright orange when the wearer is in the presence of a psionic.

9) Several small items of metal and plastic — they have no visible function, but some PCs may be reminded of money by them.

The remainder of the lockers are empty.

End Notes

This underground facility shows a highly advanced civilization, one that does not square with the medieval Ursoids seen earlier. PCs may wish to investigate this further, especially as this race might indeed be ready for membership within the Commonwealth.

As to the value of the objects, the GM is free to decide this on his own, based on how he wishes the game to go. Several items, of no worth materially (like the plastic memory spheres), might be quite valuable to a scientific or commercial group, not to mention a museum. Also, the site itself shows promise if claimed through the United Church and"given" (for a large bribe) to some archeological organization.

The Ursoids also bear further investigation; this becomes almost mandatory if someone is poisoned, or the Ursoids show up at the temple while the players are deep within, or if the Gutraal shows up (if they haven't already met it, or maybe it has a mate...); the GM has an entire world at his disposal; a small band of PCs can chance its fate if they try (read Alan Dean Foster's book *Icerigger* for a good view of how this can happen). And if the players aren't going to get involved with the inhabitants of Traasenks II, remember that Dr. Niav went to a number of different worlds, all of which are chronicled in his journal. Any of these might be the Eldorado the players are looking for!

2185 A.D.

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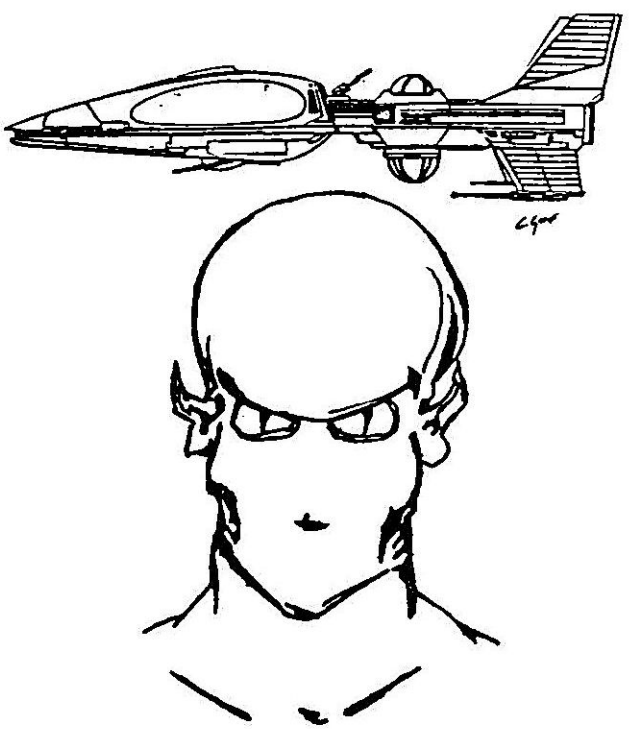

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DEATH OF A HERO

A Star Wars Adventure

by Barry Osser

You see a man dash by with a drawn Blaster. Interested, you follow at a safe distance. He dashes around the corner ahead and then you hear two very distinct sounds: a shot fired from a Blaster pistol and the cry of a target being hit. Cautious, you peek around the corner.

Walking away from the scene is the man you followed. You see his face and recognize it as that of the Bounty Hunter, M' aas Straka. The scene he is walking away from is gruesome: a man is lying on the street with a Blaster burn through his chest. He is shaking, and surely dying.

You watch M' aas step out of sight and dash to the downed man. Much to your horror, you find that it is Captain John Comfield, a hero of the vast Rebellion against the Empire. You lean your head down to hear his last words.

"You must help me...(cough)...tell Commander Stockwell on Jearch that the Stones of Braan are in the Temple...(cough, cough)...you must do this for the Rebellion...."

He fades away and dies just as you hear footsteps approaching...

GAME MASTERS:

On the Planet: Kotchi

You have the beginnings of the adventure layed out before you. Your players have a message that they have been asked to deliver on a planet other than this one. A planet called Jeareh. They currently know little else except the fact that a Bounty Hunter has killed one of the greatest heroes of the Rebellion. Players may wish to follow the Bounty Hunter and seek vengeance. If so, M' ass Straka's stats are given later in the adventure (see The Cast.) If this is not the characters first order of business, than continue reading.

You should make it difficult, but not impossible to leave he planet the characters are on. If you do not have a planet for them to begin on, use Kotchi, a planet explained later in the adventure. Those characters who already have a ship and do not need to get passage on one should have some difficulties like:

Roll D6:

1-2) Theft of an important component of the ship's drive system. Without this component the ship will not be capable of taking off.

3-5) Some law in the planet's dock procedure has been breached by the characters. The characters will either be forced to pay a fine, or possibly, even spend some time in prison. The details are left to you but some ideas are possibly: engine does not have the correct baffles causing undo stress on the docking facility (the part must be purchased and placed on the ship), the characters planetary passes have expired, or something else like these. The law that is broken should be more annoying to the characters than actually being destructive. The problem should not be so strong as the ship has been recognized as a rebel ship or something like this.

6) The characters were followed and may be implicated in the murder of John Comfield. This is the worst as it will put the characters on the run with pursuants. Comfield ran a rather exclusive club on Kotchi with clientel which has not taken kindly to his murder. The characters will be followed by a Bounty Hunter who is to return the characters alive if possible to stand trial for his murder, or dead if necessary. The Bounty Hunter is none other than M' ass Straka the real murderer.

For those characters who must gain passage, make it either expensive or difficult. If you chose to make it expensive, then Jeareh is not forbidden or even difficult to gain passage to, but the people the characters approach will notice that they are in a hurry and try to swindle a large profit. If you, on the other hand make it difficult to get to Jeareh, **don't** make passage cost too much. Some ideas of how to make it difficult might be to have a potential pilot speak real loud in the place they are meeting him. Have him blab everything they tell him quite loudly. You might also make Jeareh forbidden without a pass and force the characters not only to get passage there but also to get passes forged for them. In any case, make the players work for this leg of the journey.

JEAREH:

When the characters arrive in port, they will know immediately that this is going to be tough. The port facility is Empire owned and crawling with Storm Troopers. If the characters attempt to find information about Commander Stockwell in port it will be a very difficult roll; 25 at least and probably 30, on Streetwise skill. To keep the characters clear of repercussions (the Empire finding out who is looking for Stockwell) will require a similar roll.

The rebel activities on Jeareh have drawn the attention of the Empire to this tiny world. The garrison of troops on Jeareh is here to find Stockwell's command. The characters will see heavy weapons and hundreds of suits of Storm Trooper armor being unloaded in port. Concern should immediately be felt by the characters for the rebels on the planet; so their next step should be finding the rebel camp.

In town, the atmosphere is no more subdued. The troop quarters are being hastily put up and people are scurrying everywhere. Play out the town as a place that doesn't want what's happening to it. There are alot of irate people and they are none to interested in conversation, however, Bribery is often quite useful.

Commander Stockwell's command center is only a few miles outside of Jeareh Central. It is sensor blanked by heavy power cloaking units. The power is bled through power cables drawing from the city's own power source. Commander Stockwell will be very interested to speak to the characters about Comfield and will see them immediately upon arrival.

The Stones of Braan are very important to the Empire. The stones will be used as a power converter in a devastating new gun the Empire is producing. The Rebel

Alliance has been trying to find out where the stones are coming from. The objective now is to destroy the temple...however, there is no one he can spare out of his command to do it.

NOTE: This is where the characters should begin to feel like they've been suckered. They have! But it is for the Rebel cause which they are fighting for. They should feel compelled to complete this mission for the Rebellion. Their interest, however, should be enhanced by Stockwell. If the characters want, they may outfit from the base supplies. These supplies have been heisted from the Imperial supply depot on Jearch. Anything the characters could want in weapons could feasibly be in the weapons hold in Stockwell's base. It should be up to the gamemaster to decide how much is acceptable. There is even Storm Trooper armor available.

Commander Stockwell will provide the characters with money (maybe 10,000 credits apiece; left to the GM to decide but this number has worked in my game) and transport from Jearch to Marshellon, the planet the stones are found on. The characters should be sped out as quickly as possible since a raid is expected at anytime. If your characters decide to stay and help fight, you'll need to decide how to run this.

MARSHELLON:

The characters will land on a poorly maintained port facility. The surrounding area is heavily forested. Inquiries into "The Temple" will be futile. What is the Temple? No one around will be able to answer that. The characters should be made to feel very discouraged with the belief that they will never find it. This is where Muc Luck comes in (see The Cast.) Muc Luck is an Alien Student of the Force who has been stranded here on Marshellon. He has been working to make enough money to get off the planet but spends it nearly as quickly as he makes it on interesting trinkets in town. He should meet the characters by showing an interest in something they have.

He doesn't know anything about a temple but he does know of a secret Empire base that is an old building outside of town. The characters should guess that this is it. Muc Luck will show them where it is in return for the item he is interested in and passage off this world; to anywhere else.

The forest trail to the Imperial Stronghold is poorly maintained and the characters will probably have many creature encounters on the way. In The Cast I have given a few ideas of what some creatures could be. When the characters first hear the noise of the Stronghold, they will realise there is alot of commotion here.

The Temple:

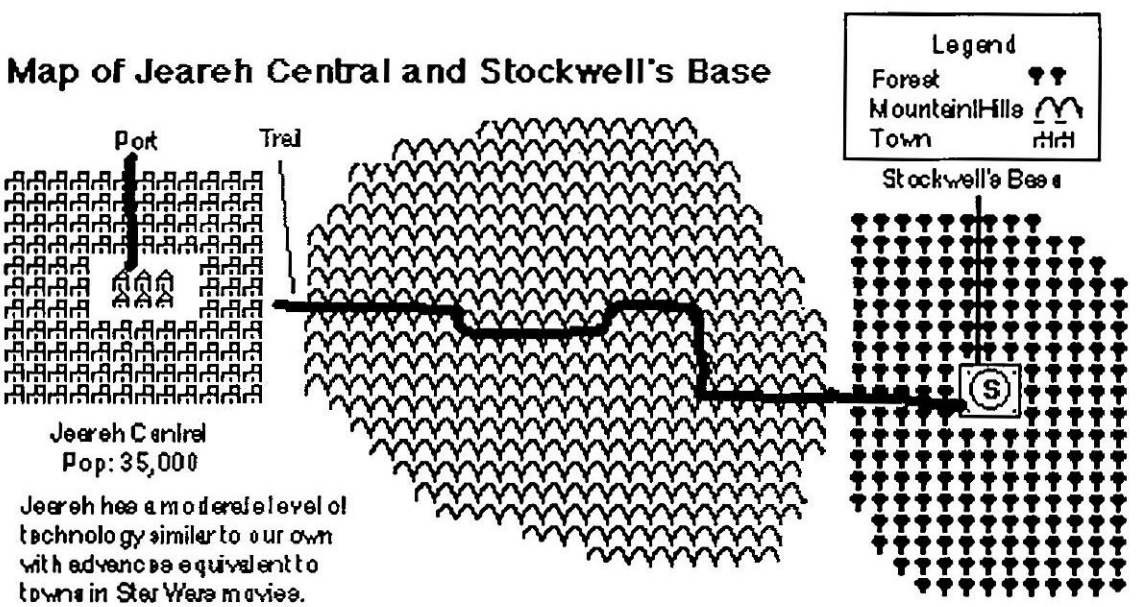
The characters should take great caution in approaching the Stronghold. They need to place the explosives they have been given by Stockwell into the heart of the Stronghold. This should be tricky, requiring a lot of Stealth rolls. Play it for all it's worth. If the explosives are set correctly, the structure will collapse and be unreclaimable. I've left the job of designing the interior of the temple up to you, the gamemaster. The characters will then need to hot-foot it out of there as they will be chased by the exterior trooper guard back to the port. If, and when, the characters make it back to port, the ship will be ready to speed them back to Kotchi.

The Finale:

On Kotchi, Muc Luck will split from them (or not; GM's choice.) The characters may now consider whether they should track down M'ass Straka, unless, of course, he's already after them. Either way, not too long after they land on Kotchi, they will catch sight of him and he will probably attack them if for no other reason than to rob them. This is the final scene where the bad guy gets it. Let's hope your players don't get it first.

MAPS:

The maps included here are meant to give you a rough idea of the layout. Any



fleshing out of the maps is left to the Gamemaster.

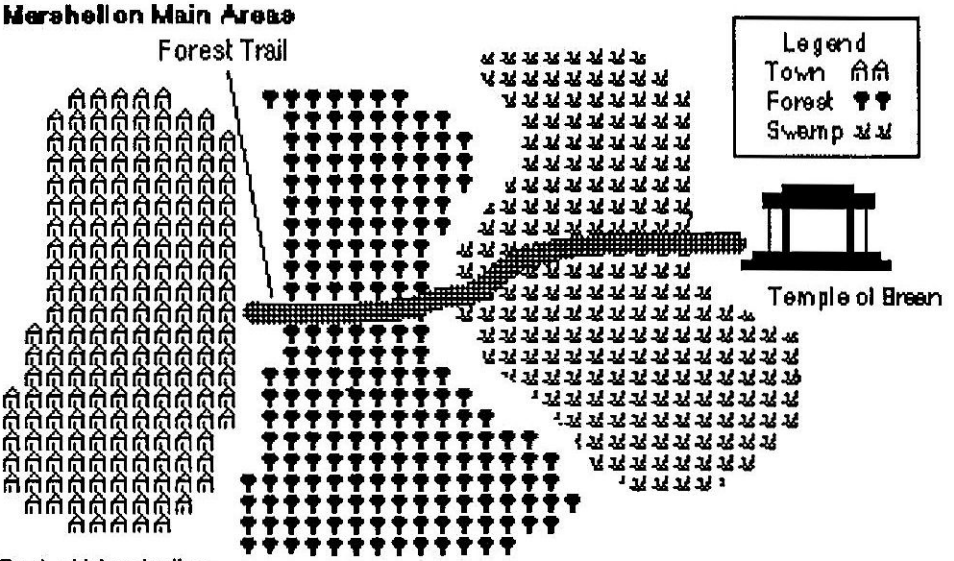
THE CAST:

M' ass Straka
7' 7" — 312 lbs
Male age: unknown
Bounty Hunter
Bureaucracy: 3D+2
Mechanical: 2D+2
Melee: 6D
Hide/Sneak: 3D+2
Blaster: 6D
Command: 4D
Dodge: 4D+2
Security: 2D+1
Streetwise: 3D+2
Starship Repair: 3D

Commander Stockwell
6' — 181 lbs
Male age:45
Description: Silver-haired man, clean shaven, strong faced. Stockwell has a strong aura of calm control about himself.
Hvy Wpns: 5D
Command: 6D
Starship Piloting: 3D+2
Brawling: 4D
Comp prog./repair: 4D
Stamina: 3D+2
Demolition: 5D+1
Starship Repair: 4D

Muc Luck
4' 7" — 79 lbs
Male age: 31
Jvava alien student of the Force
Alien Race: 4D+1
Climb/Jump: 4D
Languages: 4D+1
Comp prog./Repair: 4D
Survival: 4D+1
Control: 2D+1
Alter: 1D+2
Life Sense: 3D+1

Marshellon Main Areas



Port of Marshellon
Population: 9000

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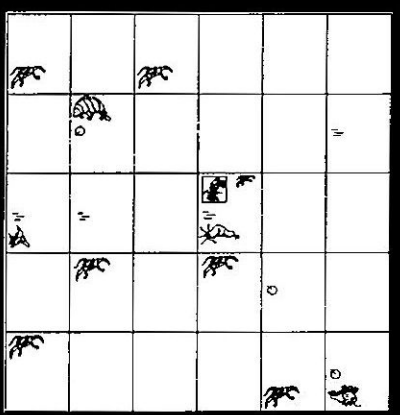

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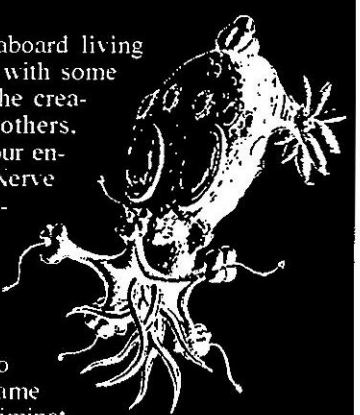

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DLE2, Dragon Magic — module for **Dragonlance.**
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FRE2, Tantras — module for **Forgotten Realms.**
B11, King's Festival — module for **D&D.**
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Mayfair Games

Apokolips Sourcebook — for **DC Heros.**
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Bantam Books

Rose Vol. 2 — Paladin Of The Night.

Bard Games

Cyclopedia Talislanta Vol. 2 — The Seven Kingdoms.
Vol. 3 — The Wildlands of Zaran.
Vol. 4 — The Westernm Lands (August).
Vol. 5 — The Eastern Lands (October).
Vol. 6 — The Desert Kingdoms (November).
In 1990, you will be seeing *ten* (10) new releases from ***Bard Games***, all of which will be done by freelancers, including the last four **Cyclopedias Talislanta.**

Digest Group Publications

Traveller Digest #16.

ICE

Shadow World Master Atlas.
Quellborne — sourcebook for **Shadow World.**
Journey To The Magic Isle — module for **Shadow World.**

GDW

Bear's Den — module for **Twilight 2000.**
Conklin's Atlas — module for **SPACE: 1889.**

Steve Jackson Games

City Blocks 4 — for **Car Wars.**
GURPS Supers (Finally!)
For Love Of Mother Not — module.
Conan And The Queen Of The Black Coast — module.
Coup — pocket game of politics.
Car Wars Compendium — of rules (About Time!).

FASA

War Scenario Pack #1 — for **Battletech.**
Leviathan — boardgame for **Renegade Legion.**
Battle Troops — boardgame.
Heir Of The Dragon — novel.
Shadowrun — New RPG using the **Cyberpunk** genre (August).
The Seattle Sourcebook — supplement for **Shadowrun** (September).
DNA/DOA — moduel for **Shadowrun** (October).
Martrix — boardgame for **Shadowrun** (early 1990).
Also, ***Grenadier Models*** will be doing the miniatures for the RPG. This game will be the company's big project for the rest of this year and for most of 1990.

Task Force Games/New World Computing

Lift-Off! boardgame — First game in the **Conquest Of Space** series.
Bounty Hunters Of The Inner World Of Rhan (Tentative Title) — fantasy boardgame. There will also be a computer version of the game.

Palladium Books

Return Of The Masters — module for **Robotech.**
Compendium Of Weapons, Armor and Castles.
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West End Games

Star Wars Companion — **"Advanced Star Wars"**, with new rules, etc.
Bad News: The Imperial Sourcebook for Star Wars has been delayed indefinitely.

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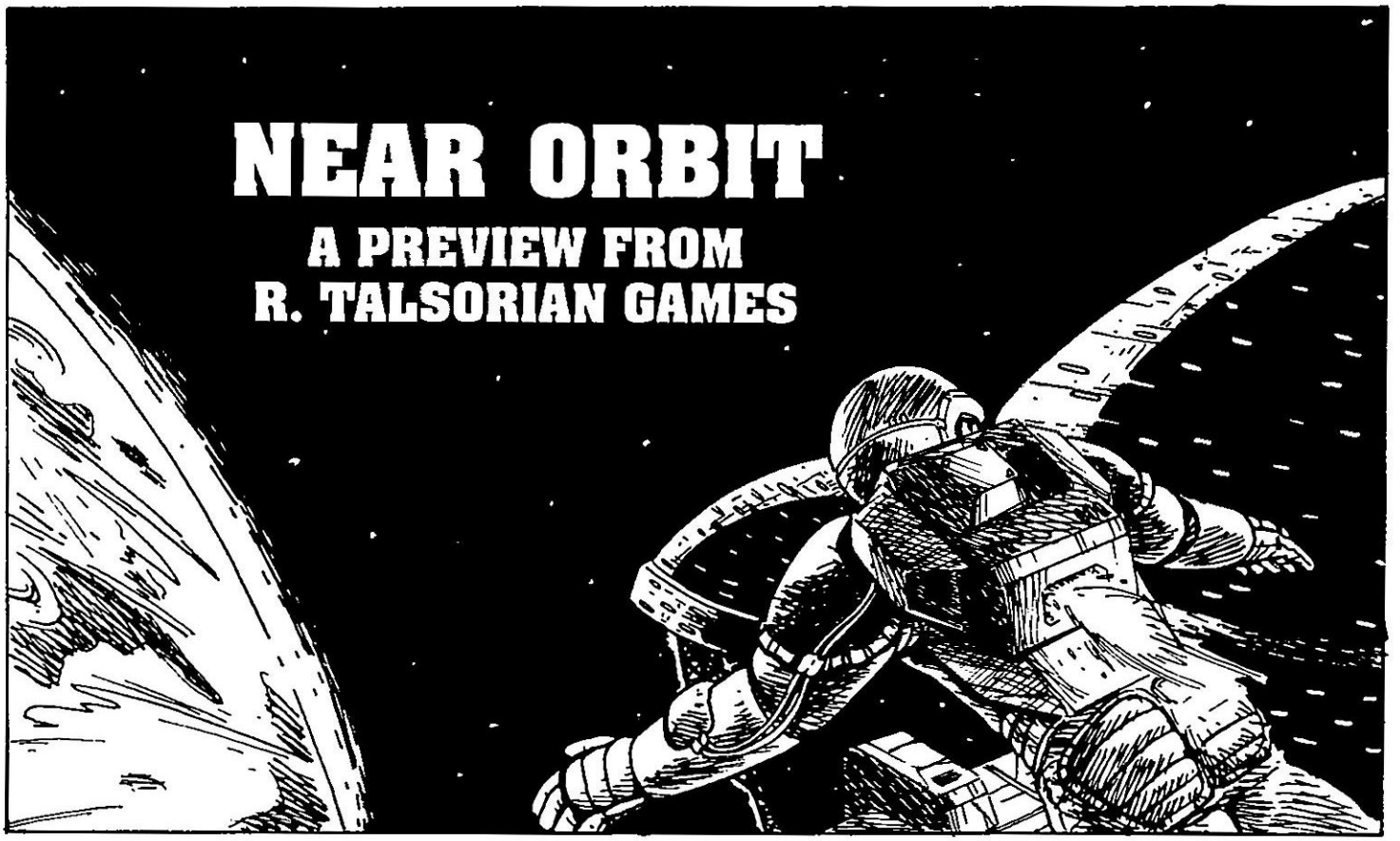

EARTH 2013

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This is the world of NEAR ORBIT. In this article, Cyberpunk author Mike Pondsmith gives us a preview of the new expansion for the bestselling game of the dark future a new world with different, but equally deadly challenges.

2013: The Overview

Mankind has exploded out into the stars. At the Near Earth Orbit Zones, the skies are crowded with space traffic; busy Orbital Transfer vehicles unloading cargoes from space shuttles, sleek spaceplanes docking among the spiderweb girders of habitats and stations. There are nearly two hundred factories in orbit, with automated workstations churning out drugs, plastics, alloys and tools for corporate markets on Earth.

Microwave satellites spread lattice wings to catch the Solar wind, converting it's energy to microwaves and beaming it down to the power starved millions below. Skirting the upper edges of the atmosphere, the sinister arrowhead shapes of deltas cruise, seeking out enemy laser sats with kinetic kill weapons.

At the stable orbit zone of L5 between Earth and Luna, is the huge spinning wheel of the Crystal Palace: Mankind's premier space colony and the glittering crown of the Eurospace Agency. Looming just beyond it is the half completed shell of O'Neill One; the titanic micro-planet whose cylindrical bulk will span nearly twenty miles. Ablaze with light, it is attended by a horde of construction 'driods, manned construction vehicles and automated factories. Hourly, the huge massdrivers of Tycho and Copernieous Cities hurl tons of Lunar rock out to the worksite.

The two lunar cities are self sustained colonies in themselves, tunneled into the floors and walls of their respective craters, with miles of solar collectors providing the raw energy to terraform a dead world. The mile long tracks of their massdrivers are buried deep within the crater rock, a hidden reminder of the time when the ESA used them to hurl multi-tonned rocks at Earth.

MAIN PLAYERS

ESA

After it's coup with the Hermes II spaceplane (a small suborbital shuttle with scramjet capabilities), the ESA concentrated on building workshacks and spaceplanes to supply them. The current ESA main vehicle is the Aries 15 spaceplane, which is equivalent to the US' nearly undeveloped "Orient express" spaceplane.

ESA concentrated on workshacks and taking control of LEO for manufacturing processes. In this, it was funded by several multinational combinations from the EEC, which traded materiel and money for orbital factories. To get these huge projects into space, the ESA made a deal with the Soviets, who provided heavy lifting capacity in exchange for ESA spaceplane carriers to their own workshacks. Eventually, ESA helped found Orbital Air, the main carrier of personnel into space and the only licensed owner of the Aries 15. The Crystal Palace is the ESA's first longterm venture, with sections

of the immense habitat leased to the US, USSR, Japanese and Chinese.

The ESA has the best ability to deploy people into space, as well as the largest number of workstations and automated space factories. It is very, very rich, taking a 10% commission off all space related manufacturing. In addition, the ESA has command of most of the law enforcement in LEO and High Orbit, through the EEC-controlled INTERPOL space police. ESA wants to sabotage the NERVA booster before USAF can use it as a weapon.

NASA

After the Challenge disaster, NASA found more and more of it's subsequent shuttle runs going to military payloads. Eventually, the United States Air Force was given three shuttles in it's budget for 1996. These military payloads eclipsed NASA, which subsequently found it's budget slashed to the bone. Relegated to deep space unmanned probes and rare shuttle flights, NASA did manage to launch one small space station, which was nearly abandoned by the 2000s.

NASA has the best long range robot probes, and the largest body of technical information on space. They also have the most sophisticated hardware designers and could build a deep space explorer if they had the budget. They currently have working ion, fusion, and fission drives.

NASA hopes to get back into the mainstream by launching the first major deep space expedition to Mars the current SOV-ESA mission is only five people. NASA plans to send fifty, plus TAV's landers and colonizing modules.

USAF

The United States Air Force is the surviving US partner in space exploration. While NASA fought for funding in the 90s, USAF reactivated it's X-15 program, linked it to the new scramjet technologies of the "Orient Express" program, and created a series of low and high orbital fighters designed to knock out shuttles, satellites and workshacks. USAF has a huge budget for "Star Wars" type spacetech, such as laser sats, spy sat, and other "space superiority" weapons.

USAF has the best weapons, spy and laser sats and battle platforms in space. USAF distrusts the Soviets, and wants to use the planned NASA nuclear-thermal spaceship as a military weapon.

SOVIET ROCKET CORPS

Under the Gorborev regime, the Strategic Rocket Corps was rapidly demobilized from a military to a civilian status. In a brilliant move, the SRC refitted nearly 40% of its MIRV rocket fleet to heavy payload carriers, leasing them to the ESA and other nations. With the best heavy lifting vehicles and the largest body of data on long term man-in-space projects, the Soviets were able to trade themselves into the current space frontier boom. They sold advertising on spacesuits, set up construction projects, and eventually established AEROSOV, the state-operated heavy lifting vehicle combine.

Trading for ESA technical information, the SRC also built up a moderate sized military presence with orbital stations, spy and laser sats, battle sats and ground laser arrays (a note: much of the huge laser complex at Gary Sargahrin has been converted to laser-lift vehicle support, but can be reconverted within 72 hours). Many of the USSRs older nuclear missiles were sold outright to Japan, Argentina and the EEC to boost payloads into orbit.

The biggest payload lifter into orbit, the Sovs also have lots of long range men-in-space experience. The SRC couldn't build a deep space probe, but could build the basic lift support systems and boost them into orbit easily.

JAPANESE AEROSPACE BUREAU

The Japanese Aerospace Bureau traded the ability to mass produce cheap, efficient workshacks for access to space via ESA spaceplanes. As a result, close to 85% of all workshacks and space stations are Japanese built. The JAB does not have much high mass lifting capacity or passenger lift ability, although Japanese technology built the Killamonjaro massdriver (the first massdriver was used on a Japanese railroad in the 1980's!) The Japanese are also the main constructors of heavy colony construction equipment, including their recent "mobile construction suits" used in constructing the O'Neill colony at L5. Recently, the Japanese are beginning to worry about their aggressive EEC partners. They have taken to arming the MC suits with anti-sat weapons just in case.

The Japanese are the main supplier of habitats, parts, gear and cheap lifting systems for light payloads. They control 50-60% of all massdriver tech. The Japanese want to help NASA as this will give them a heavy payload lifting ability of their own, as well as a crack at the Asteroids and Mars (a cheaper colonizing alternative than the O'Neills).

In short:

NASA explores space, USAF fights in space, ESA sets up places in space and sends up people, Japan builds in space and the Soviets lift things into orbit while watching the Americans. At the Crystal Palace, all five meet and fight over control. No one trusts anyone, and an uneasy cold war is extending its freeze throughout space.

Meanwhile, an entire generation of spacers are growing up in Near Orbit, planning to escape ESA, SOV, USAF and Japanese domination. These orbital colonies are fully autonomous, space based agencies the future of Man in Space.

Get ready for revolution.

HIGHRIDER(S)

Highrider is an Earthside term used to describe those who have been born in or spend most of their time working in Space. Highriders who have been born outside of the gravity well share a number of common traits. They are all mildly gene-engineered for a greater tolerance of zero gee, low air pressure and radiation. They are often physically weaker than Groundsiders, but have tremendous stamina and determination.

Another shared heritage common to the spaceborn is a common ethnic identity. In the late 1990's, the ESA arranged the recruitment of millions of people from central African nations. Entire African townships were brought together, trained and put to work on ground installations, such as the Killimonjaro Massdriver and the high energy laser lift array at Dakar. As the ESA expanded operations into space, these African construction workers moved into space with the European techs. As a result,nearly two thirds of the spacer population is of African descent. The remaining third are a mixture of European (35%), Asian (25%), Middle Eastern (6%), Soviet (14%) and American (20%).

A strong tribal culture pervades the Highrider work crews. Institutions similar to manhood rituals and rites of passage exist throughout the Orbital Zone. There is an extensive oral history Highriders are found of telling stories and legends, and

have constructed entirely new mythologies based on life in space (or "The Big Dark", as it is often called). These cultural identifications have, to some extent, been absorbed even in the technician and managerial classes, expanding from their original African roots to encompass Asian and European legends. Their culture thus combines the best of African, Asian, and European styles, with bold colors and a vibrant, exotic urgency.

The space environment being as dangerous as it is, Highriders are also uniformly intelligent, fast reacting, and level headed. Those who aren't are usually dead after the first mistake. All are well educated in isolated workshacks and construction projects, there is little else to do but read or talk. Most Highriders can speak several other languages, including French, German, Japanese and possibly several African dialects.

Highriders don't smoke. Smoking fouls the air scrubbers and messes up the electronics (in space, cigarette smoke has a nasty habit of carbonizing around charged electrical components).

Highriders rarely drink. Drinking impairs the faculties and makes you stupid. In space, carelessness kills. An alcoholic Highrider is a dead Highrider, because sooner or later, he'll make a critical error that will ace him. Highriders are also not much for stimulants or drugs, except under the most controlled circumstances. What spacer drugs there are are usually instant acting, rapidly dispersing aerosols, such as nitrous oxide or related compounds. A Highrider gets high in an instant, and comes down just as fast. The most common Highrider addition is the braindance the neural hookup which allows the user to "live" in an artificially generated reality (much like a NET-based interface program).

In the crowded environment of a space habitat, space and privacy are at a premium. Like other crowded cultures (such as the Japanese), Highriders have evolved many social conventions to create a sense of privacy. There are no nudity taboos, but it is considered rude to stare while someone is undressed. Personal belongings are few, and the "kit" or "outfit" is the most private of a Highriders things. However, most will lend a stranger something if he needs it. Highriders are slow to anger, but are extremely tough to beat when riled up. Because of their taboos against using guns in pressure, they are experts at using martial arts or knives in combat.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Space is the most hostile environment of all. An unprotected man can exist in it's unforgiving realm for only a few moments, before his lungs burst, his blood boils away into steam, and his body freeze-dries. It is an unforgiving place, where even a small mistake can kill you. It's a place where you either learn the rules fast or don't survive to learn them later.

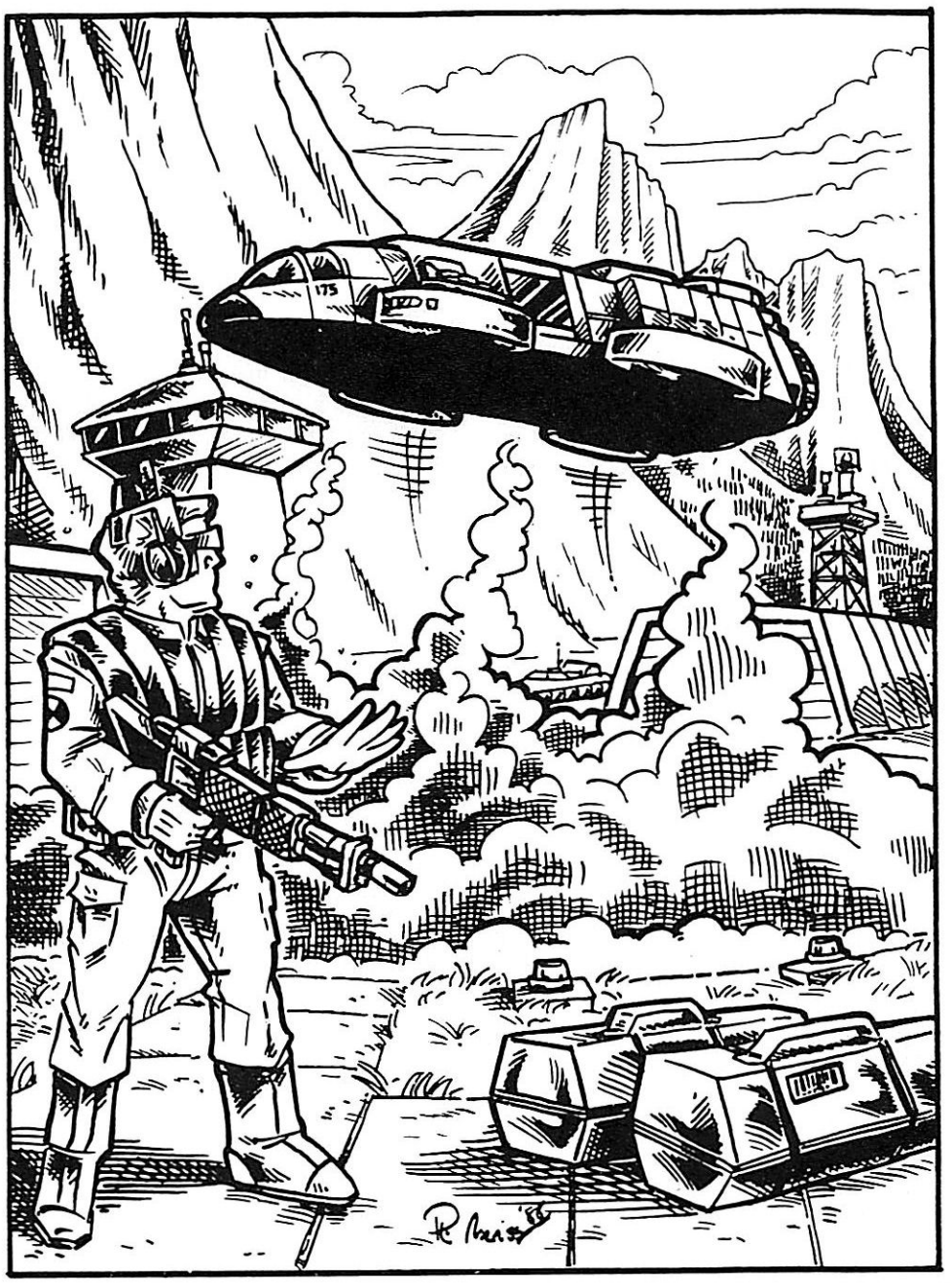
One of the most important rules is the Triad.

THE TRIAD

Every Spaceborn child knows and lives by a triad of critical factors. These are Pressure, Gravity and Radiation. They are the triumvirate upon which Human life in Space depends. These conditions are drilled into every child born in space from birth, and are the basis for Orbital culture.

GRAVITY

The first leg of the Triad is Gravity. In Space, there is no gravity, unless you make some. While drugs can arrest some of the effects of weightlessness (calcium loss,



circulation problems), this usually isn't enough. This is why every habitat area has a gravity wheel. This mini-centrifuge creates a 5 gee pull, allowing the spacer to get a little gravity each day. Gravity wheels are common in most large habitats; on small stations, there may be a gravity wheel installed in a separate orbital path, and visits are reduced to once a week for a longer period.

As a rule, orbital personnel need at least one hour in a gravity wheel for every three days in zero gee to avoid deterioration. If the subject has not been in a gravity field for more than a month, he will lose one point of BODY TYPE for every subsequent month period without gravity.

Space Sickness: Besides the problems with calcium loss and circulation damage, there's a more immediate problem faced by any Groundsider Cyberpunk character. Space sickness. Roll 1D10. If your roll is 7 or better, you are immune to space sickness. On a roll of 5-6, you will occasionally feel discomfort, but it will pass within 1D6/2 weeks. On a roll of 4 or lower, you cannot adapt. You are ill all the time, and must be sent to a gravity environment. If you were born in space (age 17 or lower), you have an automatic +4 bonus to this roll. If you are an experienced spacer, you receive an automatic +1 bonus for every year you've been in orbit, up to 4 years.

But the greatest problem with zero gravity is psychological. An entire generation of colonists has grown up in space; adapting their homes and workplaces to it's conditions. These spacers think nothing of hanging upside down over a thousand foot hanger bay to work on an exposed panel; they've been doing things like this their entire lives. Although they dutifully take their pills and do their gravity-wheel therapy, most don't think about up or down at all. Cyberpunk characters coming from Groundside have a serious adaptation problem facing them. They will find themselves plunged into an environment where up and down don't exist and nothing is arranged to facilitate a sense of gravity. Instead, tech meetings may be held suspended hundreds of feet up in huge hanger bays, dinner parties may have guests floating languidly at all angles, and an open corridor may suddenly open across a bottomless airshaft. And combat! Forget It.

A NEW SKILL: Zero Gee Maneuvering

This skill is the ability to maneuver in low or zero gravity conditions. It allows a character to kick off surfaces and catch himself on the rebound, make turns or flips in mid-air by body movements, and to hold positions of needed. Orbital-born characters automatically have this skill at +6, and may buy it at higher levels using IP.

In order to acquire Zero Gee Maneuvering, you must first get used to the conditions of weightlessness. This isn't easy for everyone. Each time a Goundsider character encounters a new condition of weightlessness, such as crossing an airshaft, finding himself suspended at a height without visible means of support, or some other sudden successfully made five such rolls, he will be considered to be unadapted to zero gee and unable to master this skill. Once adapted, he need not make any further Cool rolls.

PRESSURE

The second leg of the Triad is Pressure. Air (called pressure by Highriders), is probably the most important part of the Triad. You can survive without gravity for months, and it may be years before the next radiation storm, but without pressure, you're dead in mere moments. Nothing galvanizes a spacer like hearing the thin, shrill scream of pressure escaping from a habitat. It takes a certain amount of damage to violate a pressure seal. This is based on the Stopping Power of the hull itself. But structures in space are not very thick. An Orbital transfer vehicle has a hull only mere centimeters thick just enough to hold the air in and shrug off whatever minute particles strike it.

Space craft "skin"	5SP
Heavy Cargo craft	10SP
Station Hull	20SP
Workplatform Hull	5SP
L5 Colony Wall	100SP

While guns are severely restricted in space, and are in fact illegal on space transportation, every so often some Groundside yahoo tries to pull a handgun assassination in the pressurized area and ends up killing himself, his target and several other people as his slug punches through a wall. Solos who do this and survive are usually thrown out an airlock. Without a suit. Remember. Guns are not welcome in space. Bring a knife instead.

The most important part of the pressure leg of the Triad is maintaining a seal. There are a number of emergency solutions to this.

Goop Balls: ping pong sized plastic spheres filled with a sticky white fluid. When exposed to air, the good hardens to a putty consistency, filling the hole. One goop ball will cover a 2" hole, and most spacers carry six or seven stashed in their packets at all times.

Slap Patches: these are folded circles of sticky-sided plastic with a foil backing. They cover a 1 foot area. The backing is peeled away and the patch applied. Most Highriders have one or two at hand in any room of a habitat.

They will automatically lose 1D6 points of INT (brain damage from Hypoxia). On the next turn, the characters are dead, dead, dead. Their blood begins to fizz like soda pop. Huge bruises cover the face, chest and extremities. Blood spurts out of eyes, nose, ears and mouth. If the character has been holding his or her breath (a logical hedge against axphixiation), on the third turn their lungs explode rather messily.

RUNNING OUT OF AIR

Death from the Pressure leg of the Triad doesn't have to be in the airless wastes of space. A character can also run out of oxygen. Because there is no loss of pressure, running out of air has slighlly different rules for play, based on how much air is left:

About an hour's worth left: Air is hard to breathe, foul. INT, REF and COOL are reduced by 3 points, but not permanently.

Air almost gone: Characters must make a roll against an average task, using their Body Type and a 1D10 roll, or pass out until they get new air. Space born characters have an automatic +4 bonus to this roll, as most have grown up in lower pressures all of their lives.

Air gone: All characters automatically pass out. In addition, they will lose 1 point of INT for every three turns without air. (How long can you hold your breath?) When INT has reached 0, they are dead.

RADIATION

The final leg of the Triad is Radiation. Radiation is measured in millirads and rads. A millirad is 1000th of a rad. Over a spacer's lifetime, he will accumulate hundreds of rads. This exposure mounts up until the organism is severely damaged or does from the accumulation. There are three major radiation sources in space. These are (1) cosmic and other background

radiation, (2) nuclear power plants, and (3) solar flares.

HOW MUCH DAMAGE CAN YOU TAKE?

A Groundsider Cyberpunk character can take up to 50 rads (50,000 millirads) before he is seriously damaged. A space-born character can take 60 rads.

Cosmic Rays: Every time you go outside of a workshack, orbital colony or dome, you will take some cosmic ray damage. For every hour you are exposed to cosmic radiation, roll 1D6. Remember: cosmic rays are measured in millirads.

Power Plants: In space, there are hundreds of small nuclear reactors going all the time, powering satellites, space probes and workshack electrical generators. For every turn of exposure, roll 1D10. This damage is measured in rads. Powerplant radiation can be protected against by wearing special lead shielded suits. These suits have a RSP (Radiation Stopping Power) against radiation of 6 points per turn.

Solar Flares: During a solar flare, there's only three safe places to be on Earth, under tons of rock shielding on an orbital colony or under the Lunar surface. Occasionally, players will find it impossible to get to safe ground, particularly if they are living on a workshack. Most (80%) of all smaller stations have a small, heavily shielded chamber designed to shelter up to 20 people from solar flare. This "tornado cellar" has sufficient food, water and air for up to twenty days.

Flare occurrence is based on a percentage roll. The base roll is 5%, increasing 5% each month until a flare finally occurs (at this point, the percentage drops back to 5%). The Referee rolls once per game month. In this simplified version, pick a date when the flare begins and roll 1D10 to determine length of the flare. Flares generate rads. During the flare, roll 1D6 for each exposed player per each exposed hour.

HARDWARE

Spacesuits

There are two types of spacesuits used in Near Orbit. The EVA or Worksuit, is a heavy, shielded spacesuit designed for long exposure in space, resembling the spacesuits of the 20th century. It has a Radiation Stopping Power of 3, and can keep a human comfortable in all space or Lunar environments for up to 6 hours. Price is about 20,000 Euro.

The Skinsuit or Light Maneuver Suit (LMS) is a very tight, rubberized coverall, with a helmet and a 40 minute air supply. Skinsuits are designed for short hops between workshack modules, quick walks across the Lunar terrain, or as protection for pilots. They are easy to get into (about three turns for an experienced Highrider), and relatively cheap (2100 Euro).

The Tight suit holds the body together against vacuum, and allows freedom of action. Skinsuits provide no radiation protection, and their limited heating and cooling units cannot stand full darkness or full sunlight for more than 10 minutes.

Most construction workers wear an LMS while working inside their workmodules (which are miniature spacecraft resembling the work pods from *2001: a Space Oddessey*).The skinsuit protects the pilot from accidental decompression if his work module is breached.

Vehicles

There are four types of vehicles used in space. These are Surface to Orbit, Orbital Transfer Vehicles, Surface to Space and Deep Space. Surface to orbit includes Rockets, Shuttles, Mini-shuttles, Trans-atmospheric Spaceplanes and Deltas.

Rockets: Usually used for transporting cargo, as they are expensive and rarely reusable. The most common type of rocket currently used is the HMLPV-15 (High Mass Lift Profile Vehicle) developed by Orbital Air. HMLPVs are robot controlled, extremely cheap solid fuel rockets designed to get a huge amount of mass into space. They are nothing but engineer and cargo hold, with a reusable scramjet booster section designed to get the main rocket into a higher orbit.

Shuttles: These are vehicles which are launched from either a rocket (such as the current US space shuttle) or carried piggyback by a lifting platform. Shuttles are used to carry work crews into orbit at altitudes higher than a normal Spaceplane would go, and are large enough to carry substantial cargo. There are three types of shuttles in use: the standard NASA Shuttle II from the late 1980's and 90's, the almost identical AeroSov Shuttle from the 90's, and the Herms I mini-shuttle, designed primarily for carrying construction crews.

Trans-Atmospheric Spacelanes (TAV): TAVs are capable of reaching into Low Earth orbit using a combination of three engines. One engine allows the place to take off like a normal jet. The second propels it at hypersonic speeds. The third engine allows it to move into space. TAVs can reach to the lowest ranges of LEO, where they can dock with a workstation. The most common TAV is the Herms II spaceplane (based off the US "Orient Express" design), built by the EuroSpace Consortium.

Deltas: These are high speed, suborbital spaceplanes designed for combat and interception. They usually have two engines; a normal supersonic jet for reaching an altitude of @100.000 feet, and a rocket engine (solid fueled), for boosting into orbit. Occasionally, Deltas are carried piggyback by larger jet aircraft, or boosted into orbit by using rockets. Deltas use maneuver thrusters to move in on orbital targets. Well armed, Deltas strike quickly and then use their remaining fuel to reenter safely. The EuroSpace agency has only a few Deltas (12) — in the main, they are used by the USAF (124 total) and the Soviets (56 total).

Orbital Transfer Vehicles

These are craft used to move from Low Earth Orbit to High Orbit, or between LEO and the L5 zones. There are four types of Orbital Transfer Vehicles: Cargo OTVS, Passengers OTVs, Deep Space OTVs and Work Modules.

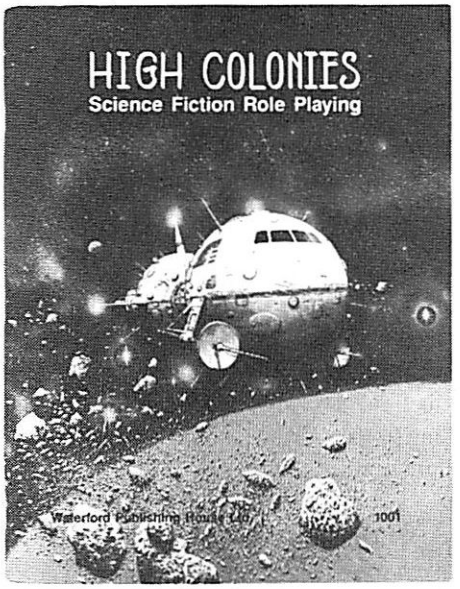
Surface to Space: As of yet, no true Surface to Space ships exist. Plans have been drawn up to create a TAV-type vehicle with a three part engine and an orbital based main drive section. The Japanese look like the best bet for a breakthrough with their scheduled Minerva-class STS workhorse.

Deep Space Ships: These are the true long haul vehicles of the Solar system. Most have are immense superstructures with rotating gravity carousels and massive nuclear engines. They are not exactly fast, but can maintain continuous boost for months, allowing speedy trips to Mars and the inner planets (about 6 to 8 months).

While on board a DSS, most of the crew remains in a state of "brain dance"; bodies cooled down to near-freezing, while automatic systems are controlled by direct nerve links to a central computer. As in the Net of Cyberpunk, sensory "stim" is maintained while in the "dance", allowing dormant crew to experience sensations and keep them sane — these links can even be shared, allowing an entire crew to share the same braindance (one way to deal with the long period of suspended animation is to run the entire crew as if in a braindance based scenario).

High Colonies

Published by
Waterford Publishing House
Designed by
Eric Hotz and Edwin King
Reviewed by
Rick Swan



There's certainly no shortage of science-fiction role-playing games on the market these days, among the best of them the revised and refined **MegaTraveller**, the clever space opera of West End's **Star Wars**, and the always-popular **Star Trek** (considering its mountain of sourcebooks, a game with literally something for everyone). Any new science-fiction role-playing game will invariable be compared to one or more of these, and that's mighty formidable competition — if nothing else, give the designers of **High Colonies** credit for confidence.

Getting off on the right food, **High Colonies** has a pretty interesting premise. In the wake of an apocalyptic war two hundred years in the future, mankind has abandoned the Earth and now lives in space stations throughout the solar system. Each space station is like a small nation with its own government, social policies, and economy. The interaction among these stations is at the heart of **High Colonies**. There's a handful of more frivolous concepts — bio-engineered humans, alien monsters, and know-it-all robots — but they take a back seat to the game's generally serious tone.

The 102-page rulebook features attractive graphics and clear writing — the tables and character sheets are especially nice. The rules are well organized and logically presented, the tone is consistent throughout. The only flaws in an otherwise professionally produced package are the silly cheesecake pictures of what the artist perceives as "space women." Not only are they dumb (like a woman in her underwear with a holster strapped to her G-string), they're alienating — you think many females share your concept of a woman's place in outer space, boys?

The book opens with a lengthy (13 pages) timeline, taking us from the early space station programs of the 1990s to the verification of a second race of aliens in the solar system in 2187. It's imaginative and thorough, though it's unclear what exactly we're supposed to do with all this information — is it for the gamemaster only, or do the players have access to everything? And if so, how are they supposed to learn it? No suggestions are given.

Next is another lengthy section describing the various space stations, detailing their location, functions, governments, backgrounds, and other pertinent information. At nearly 30 pages, this is the largest section of the book and the most interesting; even for those who never intend to play a **High Colonies** campaign, there are a lot of good ideas here that could be incorporated into other games. Among the best ideas are those for colonies' major organizations, similar to — strangely enough — the secret societies of **Paranoia.** Each organization has its own hierarchy, its own friends and enemies, and its own ideology and goals. The Band of Humanity, for instance, is a loose organization of reactionary and fundamentalist groups including the Evangelic Church of the Chosen (operated, presumably, by a Jimmy Swaggart clone), the Kruger Station (sort of a South Africa in space), and the Ku Klux Klan. The Ecumenical Council of Sol runs counter to the evangelicals and stands united against the threats of the Jihad fundamentalists. Elsewhere, the Pan-System Enterprise League is concerned more with economic than philosophic ideas, dedicated to keeping organized labor in its place. All of this adds a rich texture to **High Colonies** and a distinct focus, easier said than done considering all that's come before in other science-fiction games.

The game systems are on the mundane side, competent at best, derivative at worst. Basic attributes are not unlike those of **D&D**, including Strength, Constitution, Intelligence, Dexterity, and Charisma, all rolled on 2d6+6 (modified slightly if the players opt for the alien Chakon characters). Skills are purchased with a fixed number of skill points, rated with a number between 0 and 95. Success or failure depends on a roll of percentile dice; skills can be improved when successfully used — the system is not unlike **Call of Cthulhu** and other Chaosium games.

One of the more curious systems involves damage and healing. Each character has a number of "injury points" equal to the sum of his Strength and Constitution scores. Each body part has its own number of injury points, derived from the total number of injury points; for instance, the number of points for the head is equal to the total number of points for the entire body divided by two. Characters heal at the rate of one point per day (modified by the application of relevant medical skills and devises), but the healing is randomly determined; that is, a roll on a chart determines if the healing took place in the characters's head or in his arms. The system works, but logic is discarded somewhere along the line. I sort of see the justification for the sum of the injury points for the various body parts exceeding that of the total number of injury points for the entire body — but random healing? You mean in the future the doctors can't tell the difference between a head wound and an arm wound?

The combat system is absurdly complex, owning more to military board games

like **Sniper** than role-playing systems. Characters must choose their actions from a menu of options (fall prone, aim weapon, reload clip, etc), determine initiative, determine modifiers, resolve fire, and determine damage. Fire combat includes all the following steps: (1) indicate target, (2) indicate weapon, (3) indicate firing mode, (4) indicate special instructions, (5) target and firing character each roll dice, adding modifiers as necessary, (6) determine outcome of firing, (7) consult Hit Determination Table, (8) consult Hit Location Table, (9) roll for the AP (armor piercing) and armor protection values, (10) determine armor penetration. Note that all this occurs *after* the sequence for determining the firing character's actions for that round, (fall prone, aim weapon, etc.). Whether it works or not (it does) is beside the point — it's just too much work. Is it really necessary to know, for instance, if the attacker hit the right upper leg or the right lower leg? And while we're at it, what's with all these anachronistic weapons? Are they really using blow pipes and crossbows and thrown spears in space stations?

Rounding out the book are sections for ship combat (simple but adequate — are the guys who limited themselves to three concise pages of ship combat rules the same ones who went nuts on the melee combat rules?), random encounter tables (so underdeveloped as to be useless — rolling up a "thief" or an "explorer" doesn't give us much to go on), alien races (well done, like the rest of **High Colonies**' background material), and robots (nothing out of the ordinary, but good). A short scenario at the end of the book involving a mystery on a small mineral processing colony is very well done, clearly presented to give the rules a good work-out.

High Colonies is a mixed bag. The background and sourcebook material are excellent, easily on par with the best material of other science-fiction role-playing games. The systems, on the other hand, don't amount to much. Some are rehashes (the character generation system), some are confusing (the damage and recovery rules), some are tedious (the combat rules). As a game, High Colonies doesn't measure up to the competition. As a sourcebook, science-fiction role-players could do a lot worse. (For information, contact Waterford Publishing House Ltd., Box 3742, Main Post Office, Vancouver B.C., Canada, V6B 3Z1.)

Pursuit!

Published by
Blacksburg Tactical Research Center
Designed by
Greg Porter and Jasper Merendino
Reviewed by
Rick Swan

Greg Porter's **TimeLords** was one of the more interesting role-playing systems to come from a Third World publisher in quite a while. A good presentation of a difficult subject (time travel), **TimeLords** was well-organized, thoughtfully written, and full of intriguing ides. Still, with few ideas for adventures and no modules in sight, it wasn't clear what we were supposed to *do* with all of those good ideas.

Help arrived with **Pursuit!**, a 28-page **TimeLords** supplement that includes both a long adventure and detailed sourcebook information. It's as full of good ideas as the original book, but falls short of the original in its presentation and development. And compared to most professionally-published supplements, it's shortcomings are disappointingly obvious.

That's sad to report, since **Pursuit!** tries hard to please. There's a lot of material, enthusiastically presented, and relatively free of fluff. The adventure plot, in which the characters in possession of a mysterious artifact are gleefully flung from one era to another while pursued by a band of creepy aliens, is fun and fast-paced. The art is unspectacular but serviceable, and the maps well-rendered, even though they're a little skimpy on details.

It's the writing and staging that leave a lot to be desired. The authors attempt a casual style that really never comes off, resulting in an awkward mishmash of forced humor (the driver of a pick-up yells to a passenger, "Scotty, give me Warp Factor 9," to which the passenger responds in a Scots accent, "Captain, if I try that, she'll blow her guts all over the galaxy!"), scrambled syntax ("This should be a provoker of major panic."), and unnecessary asides (a note from the author about how tough it is to write about time travel: "The English language wasn't designed for this situation in mind.... I have decided to simply trust my intuition and put down whatever seems appropriate at the moment.").

But it's the poor staging that's the major nuisance. The authors insist on funneling the characters through a set series of events, and that's not what makes for good role-playing. Early on, for instance, the characters encounter a strange building with a glowing door. We're told what happens if the characters go in, but what if they don't? Once inside, the characters are allowed to go on an unlimited shopping spree, apparently a plot devise to equip them for the rest of the adventure. That's fine, but what exactly are the items they have to choose from? When the characters are transported to the European farm community, they are advised to keep a low profile. Again, what happens if they don't? Elsewhere, it's implied that the characters face dire consequences if they kill a lawman. What consequences? Do they go to jail? Are they hunted down by vigilantes? Rewarded by a grateful community? Saying that "the options open depend on the surroundings" is not enough. An encounter with the motorcycle gang has no staging tips at all, aside from informing us that the gang is rowdy and that the characters shouldn't have much trouble handling them. Are they armed? Do they talk? How many are there?

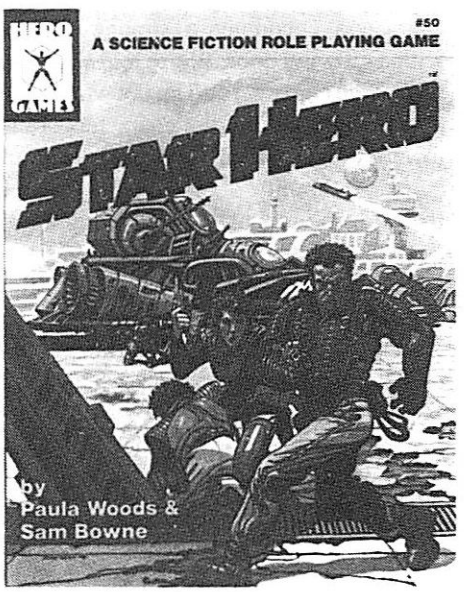
Staging and development problems are tough for authors to spot, which is why all role-playing supplements ought to get a good going-over by an objective third party. That's why big publishers have editors and why small publishers need honest friends with a good eye.

The best part of **Pursuit!** is the sourcebook material, consisting of a long background essay with numerous sidebars discussing various aspects of time travel theory. It's good reading, laced with the originality that made **TimeLords** such an

interesting product. Depending on your interest in tie travel, this material may be enough to justify the purchase of **Pursuit!.** Those looking for adventure are advised to keep waiting. (For more information write to: Blacksburg Tactical Research Center, 1925 Airy Circle, Richmond, VA 23233.)

Star Hero

Published by
Hero Games
Designed by
Paula Woods and Sam Bowne
Review by
David Rogers



"Occasionally a character may suffer the misfortune of falling from a great height. Falling itself does no damage whatsoever to a character, but hitting the ground can be extremely painful." With these words, the authors begin the section on hazards in the environment of **Star Hero.**

Star Hero is the long-awaited science-fiction role-playing game for the Hero System ™. Like **Champions, Danger International, Justice Inc.**, and **Fantasy Hero, Star Hero** is a stand-alone game that uses the Hero System of character creation and combat. Like **Danger International**, it runs a staggering (and intimidating) 192 pages.

The format is easy to read and follow, with a useful and detailed table of contents divided into four sections: Character Creation, Combat, Technology and Campaigning. The narrative sections illustrating rules and role-playing are amusing and action-packed. There is a good section introducing readers to role-playing and the **Hero System** in particular. Terms are well defined and used clearly throughout the book.

The **Hero System** enables the players to create characters from scratch using a balancing point system of disadvantages, characteristics, talents and alien powers. This lets the players customize their characters any way they want.

New additions to the **Hero System** for this game includes new skills like Xenobiology and Zero-G Combat and rules for things like explosive decompression and starship building and combat. There are an astounding variety of new weapons for the future, constructed under **Hero System** rules with new rules for size and cost of weapons. There are new science-fiction disadvantages, including racial discrimination and planetary exile. There are new science-fiction package deals that enable players and GMs to construct "character classes" and races. There are several well-developed character examples.

Combat is better explained in **Star Hero** than it is in **Champions.** It should be easy even for the novice to follow and play combat scenes, though the damage for laser knives and laser swords seems inconsistent. There is a very helpful chart explaining damage classes. There area also optional rules for bleeding, hit location, impairing and disabling wounds for players who want extra realism.

The sections on devices and starships are complete, nicely detailed and include rules for building new devices and starships, as well as rules for calculating the cost and size of new equipment. Some of the devices, though, seem to violate the gadget construction rules, and the order of the devices in the text sometimes makes it difficult to understand what the authors intended. Also, the pulse grenade explanation rewrites the rules of physics by making metal and water non-conductive to electricity. Some of the other writeups just aren't internally consistent, forcing the GM to interpret the authors.

The rules for starship movement and combat are different from the vehicle rules in **Champions**, but they are much more elegant and easy to use. This represents a quantum leap improvement in the usually mediocre **Hero System** vehicle rules.

There are rules for teleporters included here as well. These rules allow teleportaton through force fields and force shields, which, though consistent with *Hero System* rules, seems contrary to the way teleporters work in science fiction. There are also rules for buying force fields resistant to teleportation, but also rules for refined teleportation that ignores these teleportation resistant force fields.

There are also good rules for creation of, and ground rules for, **Star Hero** campaigns. These ground rules include device availability and rules for alien race creation, including those bizarre alien races with powers beyond those of humans. There is a well thought-out and finely detailed example of campaign Universe (the Alliance) that includes a list of available devices ranging from the mundanely useful Universal Translator to the bizarre and exotic Last Rite Death Simulator and nine alien races (some more alien then others) and their relationships. Eight of the nine races are open to player characters, ranging from the harmless, friendly ameboid Ylems and the Man-eating insectoid Ento to the human Phychi and their rivals — the sinister Kindred. The one race unavailable to players is the ancient, decadent and nigh-omnipotent Rheri bird-people.

The authors have included extensive advice on different campaign themes, scenarios and running notes. They also provide sheets for defining alien forms and societies, campaign restrictions, characters and starships.

Additionally, they have written two adventure scenarios for play at the end of the book. The adventures are short but complete, and include all the maps and characters a GM needs. They take two different approaches and involve two different alien races and are quite interesting.

The editing and artwork for **Star Hero**, though, leave something to be desired. Some tables have extraneous words or run-on words. Paragraphs are occasionally unclear, and, in general, the editing seems sloppy. Artwork quality varies from mediocre to god-awful, with the exception of some starship drawings and the force field clad women on page 100. Moreover, a

number of the less remarkable drawings appear time after time. A number of pictures in the book are lifted from movies and other familiar sources of science fiction ("rotate the pod bay doors, HAL," "There's no way those Tie fighters can outfight the Millennium Falcon," "Beam me up, Scotty"), but that doesn't make them any better.

Overall, I give **Star Hero** a B+ for presentation, largely because of artwork and sloppy editing. The game, though, plays like a winner. If you're looking for role playing science fiction that allows you to design your own characters rather than relying on dice to make up your characters for you, this is your game.

The authors of **Star Hero**, freelance writers Paula Woods and Sam Bowne, are also the authors of a number of variant articles on **Champions** in Space for **The Space Gamer.** Paula graciously agreed to an interview with **The Space Gamer** about this new game.

Space Gamer: You've put out a fine game in *Star Hero*. How long have you been working on it?

Paula: Two years. I wasn't working on it full time, though. First, it went to an editor and took (Hero Games) a while to get an editor, plus layout took a while, plus there were some changes that the editors made after we'd finished it. We gave (Hero) a complete game in January of 1988, but we've made a lot of changes (since then).

SG: Why did you decide to write this game for Hero, rather than some other company?

P: I think Hero is the best system on the market. We've (Paula and Sam) been gamers for years and have tried a wide variety of systems and we think its the best system. So, that's why we decided to do freelance work for them.

SG: What additional material for**Star Hero** do you have planned for the future?

P: There aren't going to be any supplements for it right away. There is one supplement ready now, though, an exploration guide with more aliens, and rules about how to excavate alien ruins, that sort of thing. There might be an (article) in **The Space Gamer.** There was a lot packed into the game to make sure that players won't have to wait for supplements. I think its longer than the other games. There's a lot in the game (so much) that it had to be cut a little bit to fit in the page limit.

SG: Are we going to see material for **Star Hero** in the *Adventurer's Club* (Hero Games' house magazine)?

P: You might. There was an alien race and some spacecraft we left out (of) the August '88 revision — though the ships we left out were just slight modifications on the ships that are there (in **Star Hero**).

SG: Are you doing any other work for Hero Games in the future?

P: We don't have anything scheduled now, though we might do an AC column on **Star Hero.**

SG: What other projects for other companies do you have on tap?

P: I did part of a Top secret/SI campaign outline book on commandos in brush fire wars around the world for TSR.

SG: What do you like best about **Star Hero**?

P: The society creation system.

SG: Why?

P: A lot of other games kind of ignored the society of other planets and concentrated more on things like axis tilt and orbit of planets. We wanted to concentrate more on aliens on the street. We also wanted to explore whether or not it was possible for humans to think up something truly alien or just exaggerations of humans. So we came up with this sheet with a bunch of questions about alien cultures. One of the playtesters liked it so much he used it for **Fantasy Hero.** He added magic questions — you know, what kind of magic do they use, are they afraid of magic — that sort of thing.

SG: What do you like least about **Star Hero**?

P: I wanted more in it. We had to cut out the astronomy discussion. It included

things like distances between galaxies, that sort of thing. It was kind of helpful. We also cut the Hoth race of reptilian flying creatures that liked to fight in the air. The printing process required a multiple of 32 pages, so we're stuck with a certain page limit.

SG: Do you have any last comments?

P: We went to a lot of effort to include women in the game. We thought it was kind of important to include the majority of people in the world.

SG: Do you think that role playing games ignore women?

P: A lot of them do, but its becoming standard to include women in games. I know that TSR's **Top Secret**, Steve Jackson Games, and West End are including women. That's four big companies trying to include women in their games.

We used a lot of feminine pronouns in the text and I think it makes it easier to follow, especially in combat examples. We also went out of our way to put women in positions of power in adventures and in the society.

SG: I noticed that the bad guys were chauvinists.

P: Oh, the Kindred, yeah they are. I've noticed that in a lot of Science Fiction males predominate as captains, lawyers, doctors, etc. I think its kind of a silly view of the future.

SG: Do you think Science Fiction is chauvinist?

P: A lot of it is, though some is actually quite enlightened. I think I'm the first woman to design a role-playing game for

Hero or I.C.E. (true). I'm just the third woman to write a role-playing game at all. The author of **Hawkmoon** was the second. The game the first woman wrote was small, a while ago, and I'm not sure what it was.

After talking to Ms. Woods, I called editor Rob Bell at I.C.E., to find out more about the future of **Star Hero**.

SG: What kind of support will there be for **Star Hero**?

Rob: Well, as you know, **Star Hero** is part of the **Hero System**, so it's compatible with all Hero products. We intend to put out future support products aimed specifically at the **Star Hero** audience, possible joint **Star Hero/Space Master** projects.

SG: When?

R: We won't have any **Star Hero** material before summer.

SG: Will there be a **Star Hero** column in the AC?

R: That, of course, will be up to the new editor. We here at Hero Games intend to support it fully. We're very excited about the possibilities for **Star Hero**. Science Fiction is a strong market, and its time Hero had an entry.

Art by Janet Aulisio, Tim Bradstreet, Doug Schuler, and Rick Harris
Graphic Quality Good
Artwork Quality Poor
Price $15.00

Talislanta

Published by
Bard Games
Designed by
Steve Sechi
Review/Preview by
Craig Sheeley

"No Elves" — the advertising phrase sums up the aim of the **Talislanta** system to get away from "look-alike" fantasy systems, to have a fantasy system not drawn from any existing mythos and related to no other gameworld. In that aim, author Steve Sechi has succeeded; the only gameworld **Talislanta** can be compared to is Professor M.A.R Barker's **Tukemel**, and **Talislanta** is much more Earth-like.

Setting the tone and illustrating the world was the first priority: the first book of the series, **The Chronicles of Talislanta** accomplishes these goals. The **Chronicles** illustrate the continent of **Talislanta**, the countries and kingdoms their people. Each of the 29 countries and seven major islands (or island chains) is give a brief profile of the land, flora and fauna.

More attention is given to the beings that inhabit each area, since the real uniqueness of **Talislanta** lies in its diverse people — at present count, over 70 sentient races or man-like species inhabit the continent. The majority of these are human, but each race has its own culture and customs. The result of the culture mix is an atmosphere similar to that found in the tales of **Sinbad the Sailor**: Different and exotic peoples in a world of differing customs and mores.

The Chronicles of Talislanta provides the setting for a fantasy campaign that doesn't have such fantasy staples as orcs, halflings, dwarfs, etc... or even elves. No rules or game statistics are included in the **Chronicles**, just information and illustrations.

The Talislantan Handbook, on the other hand, is devoted to game material for the Talislantan millieu. Detailed character generation, combat and magic, skills and equipment rules are to be found in the book — everything needed to actually play in the world of **Talislanta**.

Character creation is simple enough — choose the character race and type, tailor the attributes, choose skills and outfit the character. The only difficulty is that of deciding what race/type to play! There are over 100 races and types of characters to choose from, ranging from relatively mundane types as professional warriors and mages through multi-professionals (mage-warriors, rogues) to esoterics like botanomancers (plant-mage botanists), dung-merchants, technomancers (technical magicians) and performers. Furthermore, each race has its advantages and disadvantages — Thrall warriors are immensely strong and have no fear but cannot ever learn magic, while Danuvian swordswoman could if she wished.

Combat, magic and skill/attribute use are all resolved on one table with a d20 roll — no need for multiple tables. Skill level and attributes add directly to the rolls for easy resolution (attributes are expressed in single-digit numbers, plus or minus; they are added to rolls as appropriate). Results range from Critical Success to Critical Failure or Mishap (with amusing, annoying, or disastrous consequences).

Be warned, the combat system is quite deadly — battling superior foes invites disaster. Magic is also quite powerful: Unlike other popular systems, magicians are allowed unlimited spell-casting from written works — if they want to risk it.

The **Talislanta** system makes a refreshing break from the tradition of character levels and level-innate skills. In most systems, a fighter is restricted only to those abilities inherent to the class — such things as magic, thieving or intellectual skills are not allowed. In the **Talislanta** system, certain skills are assigned to the beginning character based on background and occupation, but other skills may be chosen or added during play. Thieves like Fafhrd or the Grey Mouser (both consumate fighters) can be made, or even characters not covered by "multi-class" rules in other popular fantasy games. The skills a character may have are only limited by racial limits (Thralls and magic, for instance) and the level of the character's intelligence.

Experience may be used to raise skill levels, raise the character's overall level, or acquire new skills. Most skillscost 10 points to acquire or raise 1 level; raising the character's overall level raises all skills by 1 and adds to hit points but costs 25 points. Experience is awarded from role-play, not from hacking creatures and looting their treasures.

Equipment tables are listed in the back of the book — there is a large section describing some of the more uniquely Talislantan items.

Although **The Talislantan Handbook** lists animal and plant names and minimal game data, information on the fauna and flora of **Talislanta** is not in the handbook. Complete information on all the creatures mentioned in the handbook is available in **A Naturalist's Guide to Talislanta.** Both domesticated and wild types are detailed, along with sentients like the races of Elementals (demons) and the Diabolics (devils), as well as capsule treatment of all "non-human" races known to inhabit the continent.

True to form, many of the creatures that roam **Talislanta** would disturb a zoologist — they're close enough to Earth-norm to mistake them for regular creatures (some of them, that is) but alien enough to be very different. Instead of horses, for example, Talislantans use *equs*, horse-like creatures with predominately saurian anchestry — scaled leathery hides, clawed toes,

long teeth and a reputation for almost human intellect characterize the breed.

There are truly unearthly creatures on **Talislanta**, of course: Monsters like the department-store-sized ogrant, the sea-serpent kra eels, the insecoid raknids, and more.

Each creature's statistics, appearance, size and habitat are listed along with an illustration of each being or creature — there is no doubt as to the appearance of each.

A short section is devoted to notable plants including such examples as the barge-tree, needle-leaf and stranglewood.

In a similar fashion, the **Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide** adds information about some of the more famous and inventive mages of Talislanta's past, some of their spells, new "character classes" of racial magicians, a section about the Lycean arcanum (the foremost and only teaching college of magic in **Talislanta**) and a short work of fiction.

The most useful sections of the **Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide** are those concerning the new magicians and the ancient spells of past master sorcerers. These spells are often quite effective and spectacular, although spells such as Rodinn's Spell of Sartorial Splendor (a spell which cleans and repairs garments) tend towards the eccentric. The book does contain useful information, especially the spells for dimension-bending and for dealing with the beings who enter through such interdimensional spells.

The **Cyclopedia Talislanta** is just that: A book filled with supplemental information not unified by a common theme. Descriptions of Talislantan locations, full-color maps of sections of **Talislanta** which join into a full map of the continent, new creatures, new races (and character profiles for the new races), new conveyances and gamemaster's information mingle in the **Cyclopedia Talislanta.**

The creatures are well-illustrated and varied — there are non-hostile animals documented here, as well as the usual assortment of monster-types. The encyclopedia-style information is listed alphabetically, a minor drawback which spreads specific places in the same areas throughout this section. The section on new character race types is brief and concise, as is the gamemaster section (which takes up two pages with new weapons, skills and information).

Overall Evaluation

The **Talislanta** system is playable, simple and easy to master. Characters are still somewhat limited by the restricted character profiles (for instance, the only listed profile for a Cymrillian is that of Magician) but skill selection and use helps diminish this problem.

The world of **Talislanta** is certainly different from any other fantasy world, and there are indeed **"No Elves,"** as the ads boast. The world is large enough to explore but small enough to be manageable while sporting a huge variety of races, creatures and cultures.

Talislanta has its problems. Although it has more character types than any other game system, the rigidity of the character profiles prevents too much deviation for certain races. There are occasional rules that are vague or confusing or left out of the books. There is as yet no one-page map of the Talislantan continent, making measuring difficult. Finally, the information on the cultures of **Talislanta** is too brief for more than capsule views.

Future Releases

Bard Games will be releasing the revised version of **The Talislantan Handbook** is early 1989. The revision is to correct omissions in the original handbook, define previously vague rules and add rules for creating variant character profiles, freeing nearly every race from the narrow profile ranges listed before.

Following the revised **Talislantan Handbook** is a series of volumes in the **Cyclopedia Talislanta** series. Each volume will cover a different section of the Talislantan continent, detailing each country's people and culture. Unusual plants and animals are to have their own section. New rules, weapons and spells are to be included as appropriate. Finally, each volume will include several ready-to-play adventures (one for each area). The first volume, **The Seven Kingdoms**, will have seven such adventures.

There are to be 10 volumes in the **Cyclopedia Talislanta** series, according to present plans. **The Seven Kingdoms** is nearing completion and the next four volumes are presently being written.

Bard Games' plans for **Talislanta** material following the **Cyclopedia Talislanta** series are still in the formative stage.

Complexity: Medium
Play Value: High
Prices: **The Chronicles of Talislanta:** $12.00; **The Talislantan Handbook:** $9.95; **A Naturalist's Guide to Talislanta:** $12.00; **Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide:** $12.00; **Cyclopedia Talislanta:** $14.95; Revised **The Talislantan Handbook:** Price unknown; Future **Cyclopedia Talislanta volumes:** Price unknown.

The Broken Covenant of Calebais

Published by
Lion Rampant
Designer by
Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein-Hagen
Reviewed by
John Nephew

Last year a new, critically acclaimed game, **Ars Magica**, began to creep into the role-playing scene. It was the second product of Lion Rampant, a small company founded by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein-Hagen, then a senior and a junior, respectively, at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

Ars Magica (pronounced with a hard "g," in "good") is a new variant on the RPG-industry-old theme of medieval fantasy. But don't let this fool you: It is in truth a daring, progressive system, at times pretentious, and in general brilliant. If, like me, you enjoy sophisticated fantasy role-playing in a setting intensely alive, this is the leading edge and exactly where you want to be. It deservedly won the Gamers Choice Award for Best New Game of 1988.

The first adventure published by Lion Rampant to support **Ars Magica** is **Calebais**, a work of the game's authors. Some people have been surprised that the first adventure of such an avant-guard FRPG is (how neolithic!) a "dungeon" setting.

I must concede that, knowing **Ars Magica**, one would hardly expect a dungeon to flaunt the game's merits. To the credit of the designers, however, **The Broken Covenant of Calebais** succeeds in being a very good scenario and showing off **ArM**'s unique qualities. Like **ArM** itself, **Calebais** is "radical" in the word's true

meaning: It does to the *root* of RPG's — the earliest seminal ideas — and reformulates them in a new and arguably better way.

The plot of the adventure is not very complex. Briefly, a covenant of magi was destroyed and magically sealed from the world 50 years ago. The playing troupe's own covenant receives information on how to gain entrance, and some members (the party) troop off to explore, gather precious *vis* (the raw stuff of magical power), and perhaps learn what befell mighty Calebais, once invincible stronghold.

Along the way the party may interact with a number of well-developed non-player characters. To gain entrance to the ruined covenant, the mysterious Veil of Riddles must be passed. (This is an interesting puzzle that does make sense in the adventure's context, as the back cover brags.) As they explore the ruins, the magi, companions and grogs may meet and interact with an intelligent, ferret-like race and the ghosts of dead wizards, among other things.

The adventure really has something for everyone: hack'n'slash, role-playing, problem-solving, etc. A little bit of each is needed to complete the adventure, but beyond that you have freedom as Storyteller and players to adjust the focus according to your group's tastes.

On the down side, realize that Lion Rampant is still a young company, and the product is somewhat rough around the edges, especially in maps and artwork. As the company grows and matures I expect increasingly professional packaging. (I also hope Lion Rampant won't be too long in publishing more scenarios, especially those that take advantage of **ArM**'s unique characteristics.)

I heartily recommend this adventure to all FRP gamers, whatever system you may use. Some technical sides may be difficult to convert, but the background and many fascinating personalities make it worth the effort. The numerous innovations scattered through the text should make your gaming grow and improve even if you never run the adventure.

Price is $7.95.

Reviewer's Note: Products of Lion Rampant may be difficult to find at your local store, as they are not (yet) printed on a very large scale. The Co-President of Lion Rampant, Mark Rein-Hagen, informs me that **Ars Magica**'s first run sold out, but a second printing should be available at the time this review appears (Cost $14.95), and a revised and improved second edition of the rules (including a full-color cover) is supposed to be out in time for ORIGINS this summer. He adds that one can order products directly from the company at P.O. Box 621, Northfield, MN 55057. They request a check or money order for the cost of the product(s) plus $2.00 postage & handling.

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THE MULTIVERSE

by Kerie Cambell and Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen

THE MILLION SPHERES

The multiverse consists of a vast number of spheres, each containnig one or more planes of existence, or different dimensions of space and time. Imagine the spheres as molecules in a liquid. The spheres revolve around, bump into, and pass through one another. Some spheres stay in close proximity to each other, even touching or overlapping continually through the millennia. Others travel set courses and rarely encounter other spheres.

When two or more spheres intersect, forming a conjunction, travel is possible between the touching planes. Sometimes the spheres overlap for eons (as did the Fifteen Planes of the Corum novels), often they collide off one another in a matter of minutes, leaving hapless would-be wayfarers caught on an alien plane in an alien sphere, unable to return home.

Once in an eternity comes the Conjunction of the Million Spheres, in which all spheres coincide in the space-time continuum. Such is a time of great wars, paradox and magic, as the gods struggle to determine in whose image the multiverse will be made for the next eternity.

THE ETERNAL CHAMPION

Every incarnation of the Eternal Champion is torn by doubt and fear, and often guilt. Many search for a higher being that controls the whimsical gods of Law and Chaos. Often, as in the case of one manifestation or Erekose, he remembers other incarnations. More often, he has no memory of his other pasts or glimpses them only in disquieting dreams. The Champion only becomes aware of his true identity when irrefutable evidence is offered him.

The Champion is seldom completely alone. Another eternally reincarnated being nearly always aids or accompanies him. The Companion is often a dandy, full of good cheer and superstition. He himself is a great warrior, and sometimes knows a little magic. Sometimes the Companion can remember past or future lives, but usually he is as ignorant as the Champion himself. The Companion's doom is simpler, not so deeply convoluted as the Champion's. His purpose is to assist and advise, and though he often dies because of the Champion's actions, he is a true friend.

The Champion generally has his reincarnated Love as well, though sometimes two such are encountered. When the Champion has two Loves (such as Corum's Rhalina and Medhbh, or Elric's Cymoril and Zarozinia), the second is found only after the first is irrevocably lost. The Love is doomed to love the Champion and, like the Companion, is often slain by or because of him.

Too, the Champion has his Adversary, who fights against him. Prince Gaynor the Damned, Prince Yyrkoon, and Baron Meliadus of Kroiden are all examples of these.

At any given time on one plane, there can be one Champion, one Love, and up to four Companions. The Adversaries are usually manifest in numbers of no more than three, and they will never work together. At times of great peril to the Multiverse, such as the example in THE SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE, more Champions may work together, but this is rare and may only happen once or twice an eternity. More would sunder the very fabric of the multiverse, releasing all-consuming entropy.

THE COSMIC BALANCE, THE SWORD, THE JEWEL, AND THE RUNESTAFF

At the beginning of this cycle of the multiverse, god-like alien entities forged three items of power to help control Chaos, which was and is more powerful than Law. The Sword and the Jewel were first. Made for and of Chaos to fight it (as fire fights fire), the Sword and Jewel are aspects of the same item. One or the other may exist on a plane, never both. The powers of these items fluctuate depending on the plane they are on at the time. Though made to fight Chaos, these items act in the unpredictable and treacherous manner of all Chaos.

The Runestaff is the implement of Law. It acts in a more subtle manner than does the Sword. The Sword/Jewel and the Runestaff are inhabited by two beings who are actually one, divided into two halves, Lawful and Chaotic. In Tanelorn at the conjunction of the seventh Hawkmoon book, the Sword-being gained possession of both the Jewel and the Sword simultaneously, which gave it enough power to engulf the Runestaff, making it whole, though Chaotic in nature.

The Cosmic Balance was made to uphold the rules laid down to govern the gods of Law and Chaos. It has the power to check a god's actions if absolutely necessary, though the Balance usually uses the Champion for this purpose.The Champion may seem to work for Law or Chaos at a given time, but the Balance is his true standard and liege. At the Conjunction of the Million Spheres, Hawkmoon and Erekose (two aspects of the Eternal Champion) manage to destroy the Sword, Jewel, Runestaff and Balance, releasing men to their own devices for the next eternity.

It is rumored by some that an ultimate deity controls the Balance and the fate of the multivers.. The Hand which holds the Balance is perhaps the being the Champion is eternally seeking.

CHAPTER I: PLANE DEFINERS

The balance between the polarities of Law and Chaos is essential to the many worlds of the Multivers. The worlds differ in the mix of each polarity. Where Chaos is present, magic works more easily. Where Law is present, technological devices work more easily.

Nine types of planes are defined according to their mixture of Law and Chaos. Type I is Absolute Chaos, type IX is Absolute Law, and between lie various mixtures, perfectly balanced at type V.

THE EFFECTS OF PLANAR ALIGNMENT ON TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

The varying planar alignments have effects on both magic, the bastion of Chaos, and technology, the tool of Law. Law and Chaos function differently on each separate plane. Type V, or Balanced, planes, allow Law, and Chaos to function at their normal magical strengths as outline in the STORMBRINGER game rules. As one travels towards extreme ranges of planar type, magic and technology begin to function indifferent ways, waxing or waning depending on the plane.

TECHNOLOGY

Due to their stable natures, technological items will function normally on any plane. Such items carry a bit of their own Law about them and remain stable even in the worst entropy has to offer. Therfore, a Lawful item such as a flamelance that is taken to a Type I plane will still do 5D6 damage. It will function until it runs out of charges or breaks.

Repairing a broken item on another plane is a different matter. If the plane has the same, or higher, technological rating, a part to replace a broken component might be found or manufactured. On a world with a lesser technological level, the item cannot be repaired.

Normal technological weapons such as swords, firearms, cannon, cannot harm demons that have protection against non-magical weaponry, in particular, demons of protection.

Extraordinary weapons are exceptions, including the energy weapons such as the laser, anti-neuron beamer, and flamelances. These lawful items are very powerful in their own right and are the only non-magical lawful items that can harm a demon of protection. The weapons act as if they were virtuous or demonic, even though they are technological and are not magically-imbued.

MAGIC

Magic originates from Chaos and fluctuates in power according to the plane it is on. As magic depends on summoning demons or virtues, the summoning chance is affected by plane as well as the summoned creature (if it appears).

Each plane, described below, has a number listed within its description. This number applies to Chaotic creatures and all summoning skills (whether Lawful, Chaotic, or Elemental, as summoning is magic). The effects of each plane on Lawful and Elemental creatures is described below.

All demon attributes except SIZ, and all special abilities are multiplied or divided by this number. This applies even to powerful incarnations of Chaos such as the Sword itself. The Stormbringer-facet of the Sword normally drains 1d100 POW. On a Type VIII Lawful plane, its ability would be divided by 10, giving it a POW draining capability of 1d10. This applies to all Chaotic creatures except gods, whether bound or summoned.

On taking a bound demon to a more powerful Chaotic plane, even if returning to its plane of binding from a weaker world, a demon's POW will increase. This POW increase allows the demon to resist the sorcerer's POW and attempt to escape its biding. It may or may not attack the sorcerer, depending on circumstance and temperament, but it certinly will not stick around long once it has broken free.

As can be seen below, elementals can be summoned to any plane but Type I or IX. They always function at normal power. On the most powerful Lawful or Chaotic planes (II and VIII), elementals may not be bound but may be commanded to perform one service. At the completion of the service, the elemental will depart. On all other planes, elementals may be bound normally. The chance to summon an elemental fluctuates from plane to plane as does any other summoning chance.

PLANAR ALIGNMENT

I. ABSOLUTE CHAOS

The world is owned by Chaos and ranges from wild mutability of form to the dull stagnation of Choas when it has exhausted its creative powers.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords, elementals, Lords of Law, and virutes not possible
summoning demons full
summoning Lords of Chaos not possible; present
binding demons possible
binding elementals not possible
learning/teaching magic possible
elemental abilities inert
demon abilities x20
virtue abilities full
contacting patron not posssible for Law and Elemental; Chaos is present
Amulet of Law melts from intensity
Amulet of Chaos x20 range
technology limit A.
example world of the King of Swords (Corum)

II. DOMINANT CHAOS

The plane is ruled by Chaos, but not completely transformed. Natural laws have been altered, the world itself may have undergone a change of shape, yet Chaos hasn't begun the wild, entropic fluctuations that mark the need of natural life on the plane.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords, and Lords of Law not possible
summoning elementals 1/10
summoning demons full
summoning Lords of Chaos full
summoning virtues 1/10
binding demons possible
binding elementals not possible
learning/teaching magic possible
elemental abilities full
demon abilities x10
virtue abilities full
contacting patron possible; elemental and lawful agents and priests cannot use elan.
Amulet of Law full
Amulet of Chaos x10 range
technology limit A.
example world of the Queen of Swords (Corum)

III. STRONG CHAOS

Chaos has a firm hold on the world but has only begun to alter it. Animals and people may undergo strange transformations, and demons and other chaotic creatures walk freely.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords possible
summoning elementals and virtues 1/5
summoning demons full
summoning Lords of Law not possible summoning Lords of Chaos full
biding demons and elementals possible
learning/teaching magic possible
elemental and virtue abilities full
demon abilities x5
contacting patron possible; Law agents and priests cannot use elan.
Amulet of Law full
Amulet of Chaos x5 range
technology limit B.
example Corum's world after Mabden take over

IV. WEAK CHAOS

The Balance tilts slightly in favor of Chaos. Little effect is yet seen on the plane, though magic is made more powerful.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords possible
summoning elementals and virtues 1/2
summoning demons full
summoning Lords of Law and Chaos possible
biding demons and elementals possible
learning/teaching magic possible

elemental and virtues abilities full
demon abilities x2
contacting patron full
Amulet of Law full
Amulet of Chaos x2 range
technology limit B.
example Corum's world before the Mabden take over

V. BALANCE

All magic and creatures of Law, Chaos, and the Elements may be summoned and function normally. The Balance favors neither Law nor Chaos.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords, and elementals full
summoning demons, Lords of Law and Chaos, and virtues normal
biding demons possible
binding elementals possible; normal
learning/teaching magic normal
elemental full
demon abilities and virtue x1
contacting patron normal
Amulet of Law full
Amulet of Chaos normal
technology limit B.
example Elric's world of the Young Kingdoms

VI. WEAK LAW

The Balance tilts in the favor of Law, though little is apparently affected.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords possible
summoning elementals and demons 1/2
summoning Lords of Law and chaos possible
summoning virtues full
binding demons and elementals possible
learning/teaching magic possible; but successful experience gain increases skill by 1%, except for summoning Virtues and Lord of Law.
elemental abilities normal
demon abilities 1/2
virtue abilities full contacting patron full
Amulet of Law or Chaos normal for Law; 1/10 range for Chaos
technology limit C.
example (The Bull and the Spear)

VII. STRONG LAW

Law's effects begin to show more strongly, as technology improves drastically over magic. Spell success drops to one-fifth normal.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords possible
summoning elementals and demons 1/5
summoning Lords of Law normal
summoning Lords of Chaos not possible
summoning virtues normal
binding demons not possible
binding elementals possible
learning/teaching magic not possible, except for summoning Virtues and Law Lords
elemental abilites full
demon abilities 1/5
virtue abilities full
contacting patron possible; Chaos agents and priests cannot use elsan.
Amulet of Law or Chaos Law, full; Chaos not possible
technology limit D.
example Erekose's world

VIII. DOMINANT LAW

Law is very strong, with high technology levels and weak magic. Psionics often take the place of true magic. All spell abilities drop to one-tenth of their original. The gods of both Law and Chaos cannot manifest on such a plane personally.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords and virtues not possible
summoning elementals and demons 1/10
summoning Lords of Law and Chaos not possible
binding demons and elementals not possible
learning/teaching magic not possible
elemental and virtue abilities full
demon abilities 1/10
contacting patron possible to affects only, but faint; patron can take no action. Cannot use elan.
Amulet of Law or Chaos inert and useless
technology limit E. F.
example Tragic Millenium Earth (Hawkmoon)

IX. ABSOLUTE LAW

Law rules. No magic may be performed in any way. The word that most typifies a Type IX plane is monotonous.

summoning elemental lords, beast lords, elementals and demons not possible
summoning Lords of Law not possible; but they are present
summoning Lords of Chaos not possible
summoning virtues not possible; but they are present
binding demons and elementals not possible
learning/teaching magic not possible
elemental abilities inert
demon abilities; all demons, bound or unbound, are destroyed
virtues abilities full
contacting patron not possible for Chaos or Elementals; Law are present
Amulet of Law or Chaos do not function
technology limit irrelevant
example

As can be seen above, neither Law nor Chaos is meant to rule completely; in fact, the end result of both Law and Chaos is very similar, in that a sterile state of boring landscape is achieved. In addition to the regular planes, the Corum books introduce another of the Million Spheres, called Limbo. It is never explained in detail and may not fit neatly into the pattern since its inhabitants act chaotic, but are recognized as being non-chaotic by Corum. We thankfully ignore details of this unusual place.

TECHNOLOGICAL INDEX

These represent the comparative levels of non-magic related technology on a particular plane.

These requisites vary; a plane may be more advanced or backwards in one or two aspects of a particular level. Note that as one climbes the scale to higher levels, technolgy7 begins to resemble magic, though one is reached through Law, and one is reached through Chaos. The technologiceal indexes listed here are to give Game Masters an idea about the comparative advancement of a particular society on any given plane.

TECHNOLOGICAL LEVELS

For simplicity in classification, the extent of a world's technology is quantified according to a scale based upon Earth's historical and projected advancement. No earth civiliztion fits neatly into one category. Our modern world is between C and D. Hawkmoon's Tragic Millenia civilizations are between B and D. Equating a whole world with a single category is complicated by the fact that some regions are usually culturally behind others;

Kalahari bushmen of our times are B rather than our own C/D.

A. Natural Age: No technology exists. Intelligent creatures live at an animal level with only the simplest tools. Use of fire may or may not be present. Social organization is familial.

B. Primitive Age: Animal power and organized human power are widespread. The basic machines lever, wedge, wheel and axle, pulley, and screw are available. Social organizations is tribal and national.

C. Industrial Age: Natural energy sources are utilized to drive simple machinery, such as windmills, sails, and water wheels. Electrical and chemical energy sources, including fossil fuels and explosives are possible. Complex machinery is widespread, such as steam engines, printing presses, and firearms. Social organization is national and imperial.

D. Nuclear Age: Subatomic science is widespread allowing the harnessing of both fission and fusion and benefits derived there from. Laser technology, off-planet travel, deep sea exploration., and construction of artificial environments are possible. Robotics can create artificial intelligence. Social organization is planetary.

E. Stellar Age: Biological engineering is widespread allowing the invention of new species. Interstellar travel is widespread, including faster-than-light technology. Matter/antimatter energy is utilized. Social organization is interplanetary.

F. Mental Age: Harnessing the matter/energy matrix to personal use is possible. Interstellar travel and interdimensional movement without use of artificial devices are possible. The breakdown of physical barriers allows widespread psionic/mental powers. Social organizations is completely voluntary.

LUXORIAN TRIPLETS FOR AD&D

by James M. LeDuc

In the Ancient times, long before the rise of the Old Kings, lived the Once-man, the Evil Luxor. It is now so long removed from that time that mothers can tell their children to be good or Luxor will take them. Yet we know that it was once so. Nothing is known of his youth, and there was only terror in his reign; and his death is a mystery. What is known is that his afterdeath was the most tremendous of struggles to keep the Once-man dead. The clerics, who served Luxor, fashioned a lens through which to empower the lifeless corpse of their God, with the souls of 10,000 innocent beings. At the critical moment, the multitude of souls rebelled and the spell was broken; the power of Luxor absorbed into the lens which subsequently shattered and seemingly disappeared.

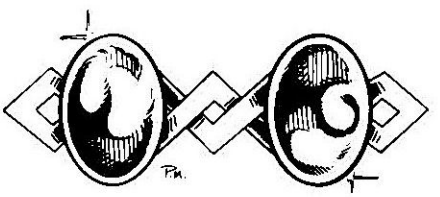
—An ancient legend among the Dwarves.

The lens did indeed shatter, but it did not dissipate. The fragments were transported throughout the world, each of these is an extremely potent magical item. They are referred to as *Luxorian Triplets*. These stones, when found, are 4 cm. by 2.5 cm. oval and capishoned in shape. They are many and in various colors, and no two are identical to look at or in powers.

Color is very significant in regards to Luxorian Triplets. The color is indicative of the stones *general* power. The major stone colors are given below with an outline of their abilities.

Red	Red stones effect the magic using capability of the wearer, to enhance that which exists or to provide powers where none were before.
Yellow	Yellow stones allow the rejuvenation of life for healing, assisting plant life or for regenerating the injured.
Blue	Blue stones assist with transportation of self or others to any time or space, as limited by the stone's abilities.
Green	Green stones allow for the use of psionics or if the character is already psionic, augments them.
Brown	Brown stones allow for shape-changing abilities with a specific species of animals.
Black	Black stones enhance the character's statistics, resistances and allows for control over their own body.
Violet	Violet stones are the most powerful as they are the "Wish Stones", and are capable of creating the desires of the owner.

When found by the player character, the stone is singular and colored in some variation of the colors described above. When the character picks up a stone, it disappears from his hand and reappears



grafted to his forehead. At this time the character must make and survive a system shock roll and then is unconscious for 2D6 turns. During this time, the stone is attaching itself to the character's nervous system. When the character awakens, he will be at 1/10 of the hit points that he had when he picked up the stone. The lost hit points may be recovered by any normal means (magic spells, time, potions, etc.) There is a 0.1% chance that the stone will divide, cumulatively, everyday (in 1000 days, the stone **will** divide.) When the stone has divided, the process starts over at 0.1% per day. This process will continue until there are three stones present. The new stones are grafted to the back of the character's hand. As the stones increase in number, they provide the character with substantially increased power. Every time the stone divides, the character must make another system shock roll. The same rules regarding unconsciousness and hit points apply. The following example is a guideline. All stones of one color **do not** convey the same powers, but rather, they give powers of the same form and nature.

Stephen Vonn is a 3rd level fighter with 26 hit points, and during the course of the adventure, he finds some of these stones. It is black flaked with almost invisible red spots that only show in the brightest of lights (this qualifies as a black stone). When Stephen picks up the stone he has a second to study it, then it activates. He screams in pain and passes out. The rest of the party then sees the stone appear on his forehead. Stephen will later describe this as feeling like thousands of burning tendrils reaching into his brain. The group's Cleric casts a Remove Curse to no effect, (Luxorian Triplets are unaffected by any magic and are as indestructible as any major artifact). Seven turns later (on 2D6) Stephen wakes up to find his physical attributes of Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, and Comeliness all raised by two points. As time progresses he will also find that his skin is toughened to an armor class of 8; he has plus two on all saving throws vs. Paralization, poison, and death magic; and he has a 5% magic resistance. Also, when Stephen awakens, he finds himself with 3 hit points (26/10 = 2.6, rounded up to 3). Unfortunately, Stephen picks up his +2 Broadsword and finds his sword is now a normal sword for him — the stones nullify magic items in his hands. Stephen has learned that a character with Luxorian Stones can never utilize another magic item. Further, there is a 5% cumulative chance per turn that the stones will try to syphon the energy from the magic item. If the magic item fails its saving throw, the character takes 1D12 permanent loss of hit points as the stone succeeds in syphoning the energy through him.

Every ten days, the DM checks to see if the stone has multiplied (0.1% x 10 = 1% cumulative), and after 360 days the chance is 36%. The DM rolls a 22 on D100 and multiplication has occurred. In the night, Stephen lets out another scream and goes unconscious for 9 turns. He must again survive a system shock roll. When he awakens, he has another stone. The stone is identical to the first, but is on the back of his dominant hand. As he explores his new capabilities he finds that his AC is now 7, his physical stats are raised one more point each; he can regenerate one hit point per turn; and he can regenerate limbs as per the Regeneration spell. He is now, also, 25% magic resistance and has a +2 to all saving throws. As he is now 5th level with 44 hit points, he awakens with 4 hit points and quickly regenerates the rest. 720 days later, the DM rolls that the third stone appears. If Stephen survives the system shock roll, the new stone appears on his other hand. His new powers are plus 3 to all saves; the ability to heal 10 hit points of damage to others once a day; the ability to change his physical form as if he were a Doppleganger (at will); immunity to polymorph magic; and the ability to reverse the effects of all magic healing that another character or opponent has ever received (that person may save for 1/2 this damage). This last power is only usable once a lunar moth. As Stephen is now 9th level with 83 hit points, he awakes, after 2D6 turns, with 8 hit points, and again quickly regenerates them.

These are extremely powerful magic items and no character may ever possess more than one set. Experience point value is only 100 as the items will surely aid the character in a tremendous way. It is impossible to sell the stones as you pick them up, they attach on to you and are yours until you die. When the character dies, the stones on the hands disappear and the one on the forehead falls off. There is a 50% chance that this stone is now cursed and if picked up, it will turn the character into a Dreadguard, a final curse placed upon humanity by the evil mage, Luxor. (The Dreadguard appears later in this issue).

As an optional terror, you can make Luxorian Triplets cursed when they are first found as a treasure.

These are only guidelines. It is up to the individual DM to balance them into his or her own game.

DREADGUARD

An AD&D monster created for use by James M. LeDuc.

Frequency: Very Rare
No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: Variable (see below)
Move: Variable (see below)
Hit Dice: Variable (see below)
% in Lair: Nil
Treasure Type: see below
No. of Attacks: Variable (see below)
Special Attacks: Energy Drain
Special Defenses: see below
Magic Resistance: 50%
Intelligence: Genius
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: M (man sized)
Psionic Ability: Variable (see below)
Attack/Defense Modes: (see below)
Level/X.P. Value:
Variable/ As a 10th level character in DMG

When a character picks up a Luxorian Stone, there is a 50% chance it is cursed. If the stone is cursed, the character must save vs. Death Magic. If the save is successful, the character loses all accumulated experience and the associated benefits and becomes a zero level character. Furthermore, all magic possessions of that character have to save vs. Disintegration (pg. 80 DMG, 1st Edition AD&D) or have all their magic siphoned from them into the stone.

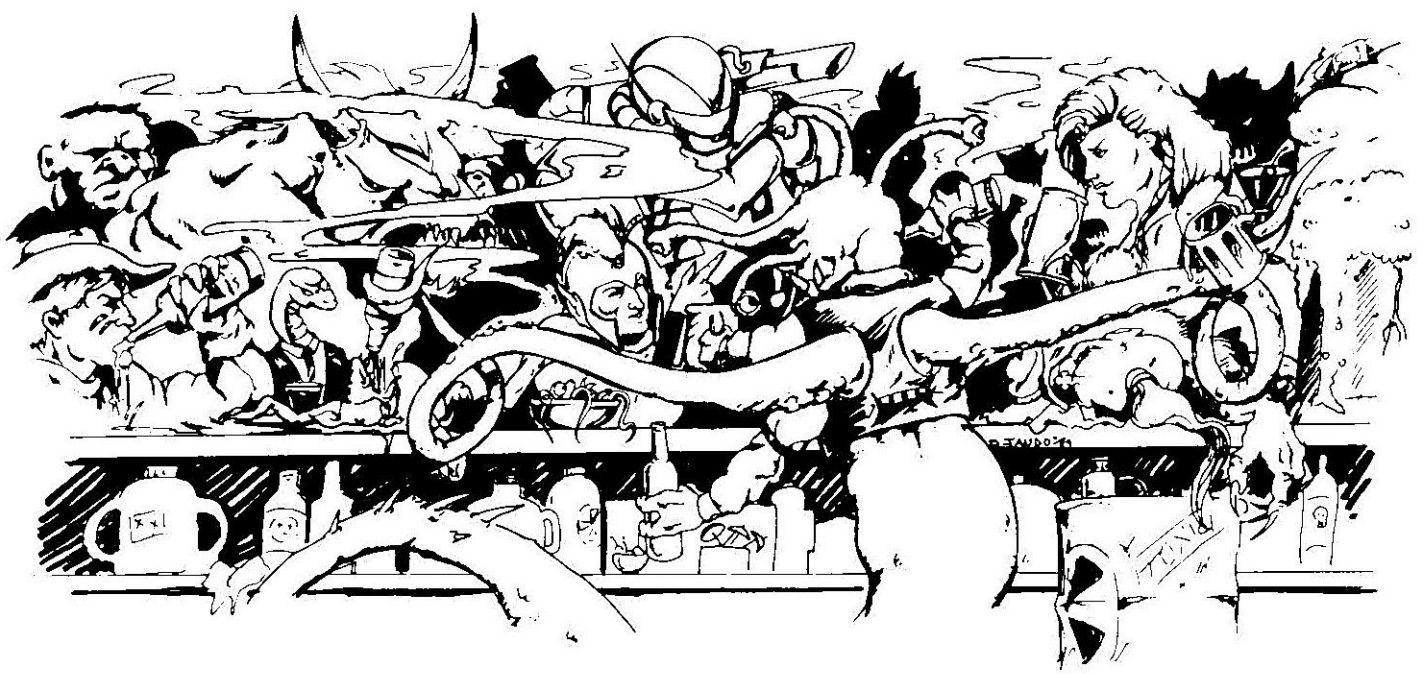
If the character fails to save, he has been possessed by the essence of a Dreadguard. A Dreadguard is a servant of the long-dead Luxor. Dreadguards are creatures strongly attached to the Negative Material Plane; so strongly that their touch drains 3 levels with a successful to-hit roll.

Dreadguard are evil incarnate, leeching life energy and magical energy from all around them. This gives them several special defenses; specifically, 50% Magic Resistance and Regeneration. The Dreadguard can draw the life energy out of plants, living rock, and the earth itself and use this to heal wounds at a rate of 2 HP per melee round. This, of course, leaves a barren, burnt-out area around the Dreadguard at all times. With a successful to-hit roll (at minus 5 to-hit), the Dreadguard can grasp an opponents magic item and, with one melee-rounds' concentration, absorb the magical energy. Items save vs. Disintegration. Whenever the Dreadguard absorbs the magic from an item, it gains 2D10 hit points above and beyond its starting hit points.

The Dreadguard has the Armor Class, Move, Hit Dice, Treasure, No. of attacks, Weapons, Size, and Psionic Abilities of the original character that was cursed. The Dreadguard is proficient in any weapon at hand and is unrestricted by class; i.e. a Dreadguard in a magic-user's body is proficient with a two-handed sword. Interestingly, Dreadguards have at there disposal, the knowledge of the body's they inhabit and the magic items that the now-dead character had become immune to the Dreadguard's touch. The Dreadguard always attacks as a 10th level monster. Dreadguards are Genius intelligence and do not ever berserk in combat. They always use their intelligence to their best advantage.

The incredible energy fluxing in a Dreadguard cause it to lose 1 Hit Point every day, permanently. Unless the Dreadguard artificially boosts its upper limit of hit points by siphoning magical item's energies, it will eventually "burn-out" the host and be cast back to the Negative Material Plane.

The Dreadguard can be hit and hurt by normal weapons, Magic, Fire, Cold, and Acid. Electricity does not harm the Dreadguard. If a Dreadguard's host body is destroyed, the Dreadguard's essence returns to the Negative Material Plane and the Luxorian Stone is once again available... pick it up... if you dare!



UNIVERSAL BAR GENERATOR

By Bill Burg

This time we step away from variants and into tables. Here we feature the Universal Bar Generator: A set of tables to help referees generate the Travellers' favorite hangout. Bars are represented by a Universal Bar Profile or UBP:

Name of bar (Planet its on) 12345 - Notes

1) Size
2) Patrons
3) Activity
4) Quality
5) Security

So a bar code might read:

Bill's Bar (Procyron) 33462 - BCE

THE BAR DESIGN FLOWCHART:

I. Size
   a. roll 1D, consult Table I.
II. Patrons
   a. roll 1D - 3 + Size, consult Table II.
III. Activity
   a. roll 1D - 3 + Patrons, consult Table III.
IV. Quality
   a. roll 1D, consult Table IV.
V. Security
   a. roll 1D + planet's Law Level - Activity, consult paragraph V.
VI. Notes
   a. roll 2D - 9 + Activity
   b. consult Table VI once for each 'pip'.
      1. EX: If the adjusted roll equals 4, consult Table VI four times.

Treat any results less than zero as zero.

TABLE I - Size (Roll 1D)

	UBP
1	Hole in the wall. Tiny.
2	Small, cramped bar.
3	Average - size bar.
4	Large bar.
5	Huge bar.
6	Immense, hangar - sized bar.

TABLE II - Patrons (Roll 1D - 3 + Size)

	UBP
1	1D - 1 patrons.
2	2D patrons.
3	4D patrons.
4	8D patrons.
5	12D patrons.
6	20D patrons.
7+	40D patrons.

Roll to determine how many customers the bar has at any time: divide by 2 during daytime.

TABLE III - Activity

(Roll 1D - 3 + Patrons)

	UBP
1	Dead. No conversation, dull barflies.
2	Sedate atmosphere. Muted conversation, dim lights.
3	Calm. Friendly conversation, relaxing.
4	Boisterous. Occasional yelling, fun atmosphere.
5	Loud. Yell if you want to be heard.
6+	Obnoxious. Look out for flying bodies.

TABLE IV - Quality (Roll 1D)

	UBP
1	Awful drinks, rude service.
2	Acceptable but bland drinks.
3	Average drinks, nothing outrageous.
4	Good drinks, friendly service.
5	Great but slightly overpriced drinks.
6	Fantastic drinks.

PARAGRAPH V - Security (Roll 1D + Planet's Law Level - Activity)

UBP for Security is the roll. The security roll is similar to the planet's Law level: weapons of a law level less than the bar's security will not be permitted inside, and overly boisterous characters will be harassed or ejected by bouncers if a 2D roll is less than Security score.

TABLE VI. NOTES

Roll on this table a number of times equal to (2D - 9 + Activity). For each roll on this table the bar gets, roll (2D - 3 + Activity) and consult the table below.

Roll	*UBP*
2- 1	Mellow recorded music played. Dancing (very little.)
3 2	Mellow live music played. Dancing.
4 3	Bar is local's hangout.
5 4	Bar serves food (roll on TABLE IV for Quality).
6 5	Bar is current "in" spot: Double Patrons roll.
7 6	Gambling common in bar.
8 7	Bar is spacer's hangout.
9 8	Loud recorded music played. Dancing.
10 9	Loud live music played. Dancing.
11 A	Exotic dancing.
12 B	Mercenaries' hangout.
13 C	Pan Galactic Gargle Blasters served.
14 D	Hangout of scum, slime, filth, and other low-life of the galaxy.
15 E	Obnoxiously loud live music played. Violent dancing.
16+ F	Activities too depraved for publication are common place.

Eliminate notes rolled which are inappropriate for your idea of the bar.

Other bar tips:

*Make up interesting drink names. "Laser Blasts", "Jumpdrive Cocktail", whatever adds to the atmosphere of a spaceport bar. If a character orders a rum and Coke or a Miller Light, look at him funny.

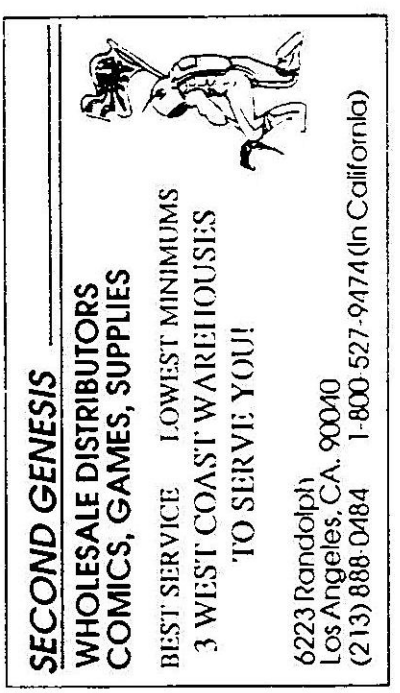
*If a barfight erupts, try to encourage fist-fighting rather than shooting. It's less deadly and less trouble with the authorities.

*Never, under any circumstances, should the PCs be able to kill the bartender, even if you have to give every bartender Battledress and an FGMP - 15. Every bartender on a low law level world will have some weapon under the bar.

*Bouncers are essential to a bar's atmosphere. The average bouncer will have a UPP of at least CAC664 and at least Brawling - 2, with weapons and armor appropriate to law level and tech level - though non-killing weapons are emphasized (tranq rounds, gas spray, neural weapons, etc).

*The spaceport bar can be a bland, generic setting or an exciting, varied experience. This set of tables, plus imagination and improvisation, will help make your TRAVELLER game more detailed and fun.

Have a drink on the House.



INCREDIBLE INCUNABULA

Fifty Works of Arcane and Forgotten Lore for *Call of Cthulhu*

By Christopher Pound

Keeper: There is a stack of old, moldy books in the corner.

Player: I look at them closely. What are the titles?

Keeper: Ummm. Uhhh. There are a few occult books and one called ummm... (consults notes) *True Magick.*

Player: Great! I try to conceal that one underneath my coat...

Invariably, *Call of Cthulhu* players go for the books whose names they remember from thye pages of H.P. Lovecraft himself or of well-known Mythos writers. The fact is that those works included with the gamebook are easily recognized by anyone who has had even the least exposure to the Cthulhu Mythos, and not only are they easy to pick out, they almost all have an exceedingly high Cthulhu Mythos rating.

Here, then, is a method of spicing up any NPC's book collection without providing players too great of a resource, a list of fity Mythos or game-related titles complete with their statistics and brief description of each. Note that none of these books has a Mythos-skill rating greater than 5%, but that the reading time for each is just as long as that of any other Mythos book.

This list contains books both real and imaginary, but the vast majority of the titles were culled from the pages of little-known or out-of-print Mythos pieces. In some cases the source material provided ample background for the book's description; however, most descriptions are somewhat arbitrary, and Keepers should feel free to alter any information given to fit their campaign.

D-100 *Title* (author), Language, Mythos Skill Bonus, Spell Multiplier, Sanity Loss. Brief Description.

01-02 *The Kanja Fragments* (tr. Dr. Charles Lawton), English, +3%, x1, -1D4. Discovered in the Hindu-Kush Mountains, these pieces in a language the translator calls "proto-Sanskrit" detail a ritual for calling down "far titans."

03-04 *Notes on Deciphering Codes, Cryptograms and Ancient Inscriptions* (by Dr. Walmsley), English, nil, nil, nil. While not relevant to the Mythos itself, this clssic work is a large and exhaustive examination of translation techniques. So long as the book is at hand for reference, it adds 5% to any attempts at the translation or decipherment of any unknown code or language.

05-06 *Ancient Fragments* (by Cory), English and Greek, +1%, nil, -1D2. Containing ancient and obscure works from classical times, this book is invaluable to the Greek scholar. Each piece is printed in the original Greek and an English translation is on the facing page. There is a great deal of information to be found on the histories of Egypt and Babylon. More interestingly, this book is of great help to the English scholar who wishes to improve his Read/Write Greek skill. Careful cross-referencing over the course of a month of study will allow a character to resolve two consecutive checks in his R/W Ancient Greek skill at the end of that month.

07-08 *Investigation into the Myth-Patterns of Latterday Primitives* (by Dr. Shrewsbury), English, +2%, nil, -1D2. This is an important work to any researchers in primitive folklore. It draws many parallels between the myths examined and the Cthulhu Mythos. Dr. Shrewsbury, himself, is an interesting individual, as later editions of this book will note, for he disappeared mysteriously at the height of his career.

11-12 *Hydrophinnae* (by Gantley), Latin, +4%, x1, -1D6. Here is another close look at the denizens of the sea. It very specifically describes the Deep Ones and their associated rituals, and makes mention of those places in Europe where sailors tell tales of these "blasphemous Mermen."

13-14 *Dwellers in the Depths* (by Gaston Le Fe), English, +4%, x1, -1D6. Examining the alien world beneath the waves, this book contains information regarding "certain penapodal organisms" and "abominable columns of foetid plastic." At the back of the book, there is a special appendix listing a large number of suspicious shipwrecks which Le Fe connects with these horrible creatures.

15-16 *Original Notes on the Necronomicon* (by Feery), English, +5%, x1, -1D8. These notes explain Feery's interpretation of Alhazred's work. Feery is often insightful, but not always correct, often entirely foiling the investigations of intrepid occultists. In fact, Feery is precisely wrong in his speculation on the life of Alhazred himself, confusing the infamous mad Arab with the invented narrator of the seventh chapter in the Necronomicon.

17-18 *Frontier Barrisgon* (by Lollius Urbicus), English, +2%, nil, -1D2. This is a history of a Roman Barrison in Northern Britain. These troops were decimated in a bizarre battle with some sort of demon named Yegg-ha. Yegg-ha is preported to be ten feet tall, winged, and lacking facial features of any kind. Urbicus' supply of horrific adjectives seems endless when he describes the beast.

19-20 *Legends of Liqualia* (by Oswald), English, +1%, nil, -1D3. Herein are collected numerous myth-cycles regarding creatures from unknown depths. Oswald is not very thorough in his research and specifics are scanty. In all, this bok is of little use to investigators, but it is highly entertaining to those with a morbid streak in them.

21-22 *The Cromlech Jeelos* (by Lucian Brown), English, +5%, x1, -1D6. This is a history of the druids and their rites. Brown hints at many terrifying secrets and tells of the powerful and immortal magics of the druidic inner circle for which he names his book. The spells found in this book are all minor magics affecting agriculture and other mundane aspects of druidic life. Brown declares that it would be unsafe to reveal the many powerful magics of the Cromlech Jeelos itself.

23-24. *Egyptian Magic* (by Budge), English, +1%, x12, -1D8. The most in-depth study of Egyptian rituals available, this classic by brief, tome tells of the mystic ceremonies of the pharaohs. While many "spells" are simple burial rites, there are a great many sympa-

thetic enchantments that can be worked using this book. The making of magical amulets and scarabs is also detailed.

25-26 *The Vale of Berkeley* (by Wilshire), English, +1%, nil, -1D2. This book is filled with innuendo about Berkeley, one of England's many counterparts to America's Arkham. the reader should pay special attention to the descriptions of the Willist gamily tree in order to catch the author's slight aversion to genealogical precision.

27-28. *Legendary and Customs of the Severn Valley* (by Hill), English, +1%;, nil, -1D3. The Severn Valley is the English prototype of Arkham, and this work relates much of the little-known history of this dark and shadowy county. The most interesting part of the book is the chapter on the witch trials of 1587, in which twelve young men and women of the Severn Valley were accused of meeting a Black Man on a deserted hilltop. Only one of the accused was acquitted, Marhorie Packle, and shortly thereafter, she disappeared.

29-30. *Notes on Witchcraft in Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, and the Berkeley Region* (by Sangster), English, +1%, nil, -1D3. This book presents a general treatment of the Church's methods in dealing with the Old Religion in those regions mentioned in the title. The style is rather dry, making it a difficult task for any occult investigator to read and doubling the time it takes to be read.

31-32 *Oannes* (by Schullman), English, +3%, nil, -1D4. This book traces the legends of Oannes, whom the author represents as an incarnation of the god Dagon in conflict with other historical sources, down through the history of the Near East. Its vivid descriptions of the yearly sacrifice of an infant to these horrible entities are the most moving portions of the work. in fact, those who read this book and succeed in making their SAN rolls had better get moving to the nearest bathroom, because their most recent meal will have learned the secrets of anti-gravity.

33-34 *The Story of Atlantis and the Lost Lemuria* (anonymous), English, +2%, nil, -1D4. A very interesting account of the unnamed author's travels around the Pacific and Mediterranean, this book places the Atlantis on or around the island of Crete and calls New Zealand the source of the Lemuria legend. The Cthulhu Mythos only enters his descriptions during the account of his stay on Ponape (Pohnpei).

35-36 *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* (by Bent), English, +1%, nil, -1D2. A somewhat bigoted book by an English archeologist, this book describes a series of ruins found in Zimbabwe. Astute readers will note some curious characteristics of the artifacts pictured.

37-38 *Image dy Monde* (by Gauthier de Metz), French, +4%, x1, -1D6. This book is almost famous for astounding and strange conception of the world it presents. Earth is described as a "dimensional coastline" bordering on many other-worldly planes. Spells which can be learned from this tome deal entirely with dimensional transportation and the beings to be found in the beyond.

39-40 *Liber Investigationis* (anonymous), Latin, +3%, nil, -1D4. Latin rolls are made at a 10% penalty for this book written before Rome knew greatness. This book tells of a lone Roman wanderer who traveled as far east as Bactria in search of forbidden knowledge. There, he found a great city deep within a mountain. The people spoke an unknown tongue, and he served as their slave for ten years, finally escaping at the height of a terrible religious ceremony which ended with the collapse of the mountain. The author hints, however, that this was not the end of his captors.

41-42 *Fishbuch* (by Konrad van Gerner), German, +3%, x1, -1D6. This sixteenth-century volume is a compilation of over a hundred legends relating to the ocean and its secrets. The story of the destruction of an entire Viking fleet includes a ritual which, supposedly, blesses any ship on which it is recited.

43-44 *The Geph Transcriptions* (anonymous), English, +5%, x2, -1D8. This truly ancient and repulsive text has been translated many times and claims for itself a Hyperborean origin. Any information gleaned brings upon its discoverer a horrid dread, and its spells are a bane to all men. In game terms, reading this book and reciting any of its passages can attract (25% chance) the attention of the ghost of an ancient Hyperborean sorceror, who will make preparations for the doom and eternal imprisonment of the reader.

45-46 *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (by Doughty), English, +1%, nil, -1D2. This travelogue of a marginally sane explorer tells of his travails in the Arabian desert and what he found therein. He speaks more often, however, on the troubles created by his unswerving devotion to Christianity in this Moslem nation. The book is in the style of a seventeenth or eighteenth century scholar, and is difficult for non-linguistically oriented characters to read.

47-48 *Vitae Sophistrarum* (by Eunapius), Latin, +1%, nil, -1D2. Readers interested in garnering knowledge of the mythos will be disappointed in this tome, as it presents little in the way of cosmic or unearthly. Instead, the author rambles about his personal experiences that he deems to range in the occult, while simply hinting that later in the book he will actually tell of many horrible things. Researching the life of the author at an exceptional library will yield a one-line fragment alluding to Eunapius' death at the hands of a heathen priest from the West.

49-50 *De Natura Daemonum* (by Anania), Latin, +3%, x1, -1D4. This masterpiece of subtlety presents incredibly detailed information about the Star Vampires and their associated rituals without greatly damaging the mind of the reader. Naturally, the author believes he is describing the characteristics of all forms of demons, and any modern reader will mistake him to be correct unless a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll is made before the book is finished. Characters who do not understand the special significance of Anania's "demons" should definitely not be aware of the possible effects of any spells they learned, and they should be noted as Summon or Bind Demon as the case may be.

51-52 *Fuga Satanae* (by Stampa), Latin, +4%, x1, -1D8. Some have called Stampa "the Hell-Spawned" as a result of this treatise in which is described the de-evolution of a Roman senator into a

Ghoul. Also, Stampa gives the formula with which one might summon a Ghoul and list of place about Italy where this can be done.

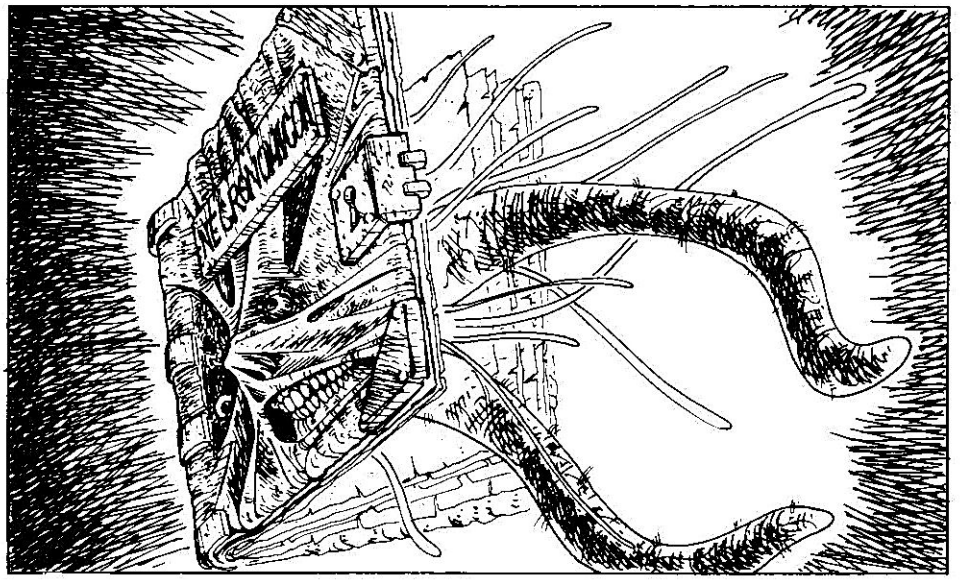
53-54 *Liber Miraculorem* (anonymous),, Latin, +3%, x2, -1D8. This horrible folio was the spellbook of some antedilubian abmoniation. It is said that all who learn from its pages will die from the poisons which eat outward from the heart. The Keeper should play this out as a terrible disease which manifests itself immediately as a series of sharp chest pains, gradually evolving into an indescribable horror which will leave the character unplayable at best, unless some cure is found.

55-56 *Cemeteries of Abydos* (by Naville and Peet), English, +1%, nil, 1D3. A modern book on the burial grounds uncovered at Abydos in Egypt, this volume will yield some hints as to the practices of the Ghouls. All Cthulhoid information must be filtered out of the exhaustive descriptions of the mummies and burial sites, and thus, characters lacking in Archeological skill will never discern enough clues to gain any Cthulhu Mythos skill from reading this book.

57-58 *History of Magic* (by Eliphas Levi), English, nil (+2% Occult), nil, -1D2. Unfortunately overrated, this "masterwork" of sorcery reveals nothing of any Mythos rituals. It is however of moderate value to the standard occultist, yielding a small increase in the Occult skill.

59-60 *Ars Magna et Ultima* (by Lully), Latin, +4%, x1, -1D6. This is the enchiridion of the intelligent sorcerer, because it not only describes ceratin spells, it includes methods of returning netherwordly creatures to their domain. (+5% to attempts at Dismissing, and if no spell is known, there is a 1% chance that a creature will be dismissed using the techniques within.) Lully is an acknowledged master of the arcane arts, and his book is highly sought after by persons having all levels of magical powers. Those who own this book should prepare for its being stolen.

61-62 *Fragmenta Graeca* (by Muller), Latin and Greek, +2%, nil, 1D3. Classic but mostly forgotten pieces by Greek scholars are contained herein alongside their Latin translation. Like



Cory's *Ancient Graments*, this book is organized partly as an aid to the study of Ancient Greek. A player character fluent in Latin may study this volume for one month, and if he succeeds in making a Latin roll, he can immediately resolve one check in Read/Write Ancient Greek.

63-64 *Clavis Alchimiae* (by Fludd), Latin, +3%, x1, -1D6. This erudite work holds many clues to the secrets of the elements. The author describes the formula for creating a number of potions and philtres which "enhance the spirit-body" of he who partakes. Fludd remains ambiguous on the exact nature of this sort of enhancement, but Keepers should play up the beneficial overtones of the text to get the players to try some of Fludd's alchemical chicanery. Any player so gullible as to imbibe any of the concoctions described herein should pay for his stupidity.

65-66 *Key of Wisdom* (by Artephous), English, +3%, nil, -1D4. This is an ancient folio which purports to contain within its pages the secrets of an incredibly old race from before the rise of man. Artephous claims a kinship to these beasts, and the sources he reports to have are the living remenants of the creatures themselves. The resting place of these indivduals in artephous' time (c.a. 1342 AD) is supposed to be somewhere in the mountains of Asia Minor.

67-68 *Praeparatio Evangelica* (by Eusebius), Latin, +3%, nil, -1d3. An actual text of an historical nature, this work tells much of classical times, and even details the arcane wisdom of a Berber or "Libyan" folk. Unfortunately, only handwritten copies of the original exist, and most of these are held by staunchy conservative collectors closely associated with the Church, making the specifics of its content an often pondered mystery for occultists.

69-70 *Remnants of Lost Empires* (by Dostmann), English, +1%, nil, -1D2. Dostmann, herein, explores the ruins of many well-known cultures, but attention is devoted to the details of minor religious cults and inexplicable artifacts that have been found and ignored by previous investigators. Dostmann laments the existance of those archeologists who choose not to see pieces of the puzzle which do not fit their theories.

71-72 *Magyar Folklore* (by Dornley), English, +2%, nil, -1D3. Collected here are many tales and legends which hint at things of even stranger natures. Of special interest is the story, "The Worms of the Silvered Lake," which tells of a young Magyar warrior and his predictable bent towards saving young Magyar maidens. The twist to the plot comes at the end when this young warrior defeats a powerful wizard who is greatly enamored of the warrior's current girlfriend. With his dying breath, the wizard utters the words which bring forth from the nearby enchanted lake unspeakable, putrescent and vermiform beasts which pound this warrior into oblivion.

73-74 *Mysteries of the Sea* (by Cornelius Van de Mar), English, +3%, nil, -1D4. As the title implies, this book

tells many of the strange histories collected by an English sea captain during his time on the waves. Much knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos can be gathered if anyone is wiling to wade through the laborious and quite tedious style of Mr. Van de Mar.

75-76 *Religion der Karthager* (by Munter), German, +1%, nil, -1D2. In its decline, Carthage teemed with minor cults and odd religions. Some connections can be made between these strange religions and the Cthulhu Mythos by any experienced investigator. The style in which this book is written is, quite simply, entrancing, allowing the reader to complete his task in half the time it takes to read a normal book.

77-78 *The History of Atlantis* (Elizabeth Fallowspeare), English, +2%, nil, -1D3. This most foul novel about the days of fabled Atlantis has for its main character a merchant who deals in the trade of human flesh for consumption by the wealthier populace. In some places, it mentions ceremonies which accompanied ritual cannibalism that might endow knowledge of the Mythos to a thorough reader.

79-80 *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (by Richard Vestigan), English, +5%, x1, -1D8. Banned over a hundred years ago by the Church for having been inspired by Satan, this book is, as the title implies, a guide to the recovery of the minds of long dead persons. The methods described herein are only of the most disgusting sort. Different end results are also described, allowing dead minds to come back and either inhabit a new body or take up residence in what is left of their old body. In both cases, the newly inhabbited body develops a pungent odor which should drive away all but the strongest of stomach.

81-82 *The Dark Elements of Survival* (anonymous), English, nil, nil -1D8. An amazingly gruesome text, this work presents possibly the most depressing view of the human race ever to appear in print. Readers suffer sanity loss from the great feeling of depression which results from exposure too this book. Anyone driven insane by this book will, at once, take up the practices listed as necessary for survival in such a dark and unwholesome world. Among these practices are ritual murder, cannibalism, extreme self-deprivation, and similar depraved acts.

83-84 *The Chronicon* (by Syncellus), Latin, +3%, nil, -1D4. An outstanding history of the ancient world, this book persists, luckily, in making mention of the more shadowy aspects of historical figures.

85-86 *Beyond the Mundane* (by Bentely), English, +3%, nil, -1D4. Constantly searching for the answers to many occult enigmas, Bentley here reveals all the information which he has been able to gather. Topics dealt with include Stonehenge, Atlantis, and most exceptionally, a strange rock formation off the coast of eastern Spain in which is said to live a race of men with gills.

87-88 *Twenty Experiments in the Occult* (anonymous), English, +4%, x2, -1D8. This slender folio gives precise instructions and formulas for the enactment of a number of Mythos spells in addition to the standard occult rituals explained. This book will also give a bonus of 5% to a character's Occult skill due to the explitly didactic nature of the text.

89-90 *Codex Atlanteanus* (tr. Charles d'Aquitaine), French, +5%, x1, -1D6. It is rumored that this book of the history and culture of the Atlantean people was in fact authored by an Atlantean. The translator would tell nothing of where he discovered these precious writings, but the calligraphy of the original was, he claims, in a beautiful and almost indecipherable script of unknown origin.

91-92 *Saga-Englendingabok* (by Loftsson), English, +2%, nil, -1D2. This Nordic saga tells of the adventures of a Viking hero throughout the northern seas and the shores of England. Readers will learn the whereabouts and supposed properties of the "Viking Stone", a strange artifact that holds the spirit of the dead champion.

93-94 *The Books of D'harsis* (tr. Olwen Petillo), English, +5%, x1, -1D8. This book contains the English translation of all five of the extremely long papyri from Egyupt's Old Kingdom which were discovered sealed in an urn and hidden at the bottom of a cave in the Sahara's central massif, the Hoggar. The question of how and why they traveled so far is unknown, but the mysteries they uncover are only of the most arcane sort. The translator puts forth in his preface the hypothesis that D'harsis himself was banished for the blasphemies contained in this book.

95-96 *Ancient Mythology* (by bryant), English, +3%, nil, -1D4. This book gives attention to more than the classical mythologies and includes information on the religions of all of the first agricultural civilizations from the fertile crescent to the Indus valley to Middle America, an uncommon freature of this sort of work considering it was published at the turn of the century.

97-98 *Notes on Nitocris* (by Wardle), English, +3%, nil, -1D6. The classical historian Manetho describes Nitocris as "the most handsome woman of her time, of a fair complexion; she built the third pyramid, and reigned twelve years," but Wardle tells a great deal more about his sixth Memphite ruler of Egypt's Sixth Dynasty. This scholarly work relates the true repulsive nature of this queen and tells of many baleful rituals she and her cohorts performed on the banks of the Nile under that ancient moon.

99-00 *Discours des Sorciers* (by Boguet), French, +4%, x1, -1D6. Published in 1602, this book is a monograph by an actula inquisitior who sent many witches to the stake for their heresies. Boguet spares no expense in his description of these witches and warlocks, displaying great insight into the motivations and hidden schemes of his subjects.

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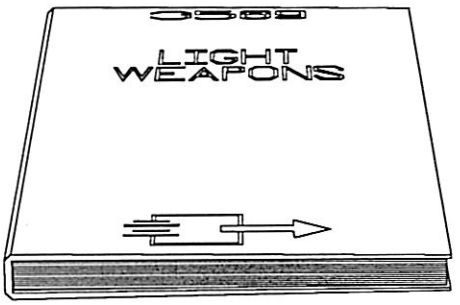
THE ELECTRIC KNIGHT

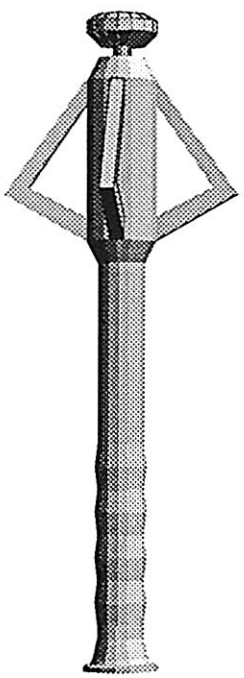
Introducing High Tech Into Fantasy

by Gary Reilly



Many dungeon masters model their fantasy campaign worlds after the medieval period of of our planet's history. Of course, these mythos tend to be expanded to include facets not found in reality: functioning magic, physical demigods, etc. Twists of history also add interesting touches of uniqueness to these created worlds. Another method of customizing your world is through the introduction of extraordinary technology.

You need to weigh several considerations before spreading technological marvels throughout your fantasy world. Perhaps most important, the technology needs to be limited in its overall influence. An excessive influx of technology threatens to overwhelm the world mythos, destroying the campaign's flavor. On the other hand, extremely rare technology takes on the status of artifacts and would be too thinly spread about. Make the technology a subtle part of the daily lives of your world's inhabitants. Weave it into their culture without losing the overall flavor of the society.



NEURAL MACE

Secondly, the technology needs to have an origin that may be explained reasonably. Plausibility within the framework of your world is required. Adding technology to a fantasy world without an appropriate background damages the players' ability to accept its existence, thus diluting their enjoyment of the campaign. This doesn't imply that you need be restricted to the historical accuracy of our own past. Being a good dungeon master requires a certain degree of creativity in world building.

A Laser For the King

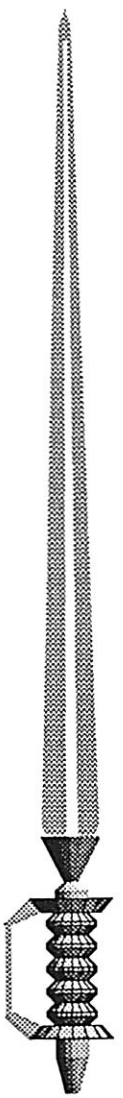
Let's take a look at an example of adding some high tech to a world based on medieval Europe. Suppose we wish to introduce advanced weapons into our fantasy milieu. To reduce the overall impact, we can presuppose that the technology is limited to the weapons themselves and their production. The noble hierarchy of the society jealously guards the knowledge of this technology, restricting production to a small class of technicians maintained by the noble houses. This parallels much of the way in which skilled craftsmen evolved in European history. The knowledge is strictly controlled. This prevents the flow of power into the hands of the general populace, promoting the self-interest of the noble class.

In addition, the weapons are designed so that conflicts must be resolved in direct, face-to-face combat. Some short-range weapons may exist, long-range arms do not. This supports the culture's general social edict that honor requires personal involvement in fighting.

As to explaining the existence of the high tech weapons, numerous possibilities present themselves. In one situation, the weapons are supplied by off-worlders! The fantasy world exists as a planet which has been discovered by an advanced civilization hailing from other suns. Contact with the local inhabitants may be restricted (perhaps by some interstellar agency) to "minor" trade goods such as the weapons.

Another source of high tech weapons may lie in the fantasy world's own history. Perhaps the society was once higher on the technological ladder, but has "stepped down" for some reason. The reason could be voluntary such as a desire to return to simpler times. Or it can be quite involuntary. The weaponry technology may be a remnant of a more advanced society, much of whose higher tech knowledge perished in a global war in the dim past.

The combined result is to permit high tech weapons in our fantasy world without unduly destroying the basic medieval fla-



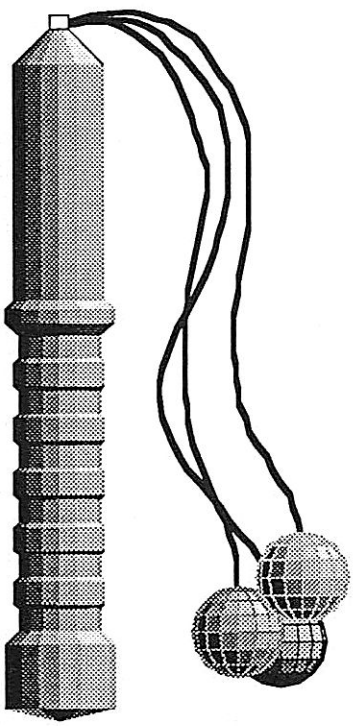
LIGHT SWORD

vor. Knights in armor still joust at the vernal equinox fair; they simply use stun lances. Quarreling Barons still meet on the field of battle to settle land disputes; they now are supported by royal guards carrying vibro swords. The feudal society continues to thrive.

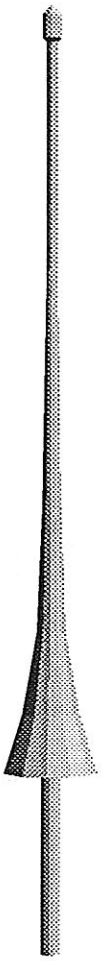
Sample High Tech Weapons

To conclude our discussion of technology in fantasy gaming, I offer the following selection of armaments. Each falls within the parameters set above.

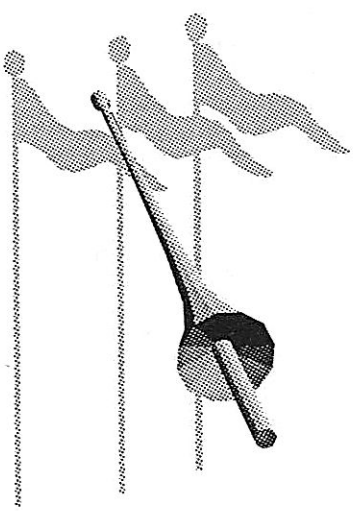
Shock Flail: Resembles a common footman's flail with three weighted strands. A batter pack in the long insulated handle carries a large electric charge. When two or more of the three weights strike an opponent, the weapon delivers a strong electrical shock. Inflicts 1D8 electrical damage (+4 if the target is wearing metallic armor).



SHOCK FLAIL



ENERGY LANCE



Vibro Sword: Appears to be a standard long sword. The blade vibrates at at ultra high speeds, cutting through most armor like butter. An opponent's armor class is automatically reduced in effectiveness by a level of five. Causes 1D8+4 cutting damage.

Stun Dagger: A short dagger with a blunted tip. Contact with any exposed or lightly clothed skin requires a saving throw versus paralyzation. On an unsuccessful roll, the victim lapses into unconsciousness. Induces no physical damage.

Neural Mace: This weapon attacks the defender's nervous system. A successful attack by this weapon temporarily reduces the victim's dexterity rating by 1D3. The effect is cumulative, gradually turning the target into a quivering jellyfish. The effects wear off at the rate of 6 points per hour.

Thunder Bolt: One of the few longer-range items, this resembles a heavy crossbow bolt with a small bulbous head. The head contains an explosive charge that detonates on impact, inflicting 3D8 points of damage within a spere measuring 6 yards across. Of course, the relatively slow rate of fire (the same as a normal crossbow) limits the weapon's effectiveness. An internal arming mechanism requires that the bolt travel at least 20 yards before the explosive can detonate.

Light Sword: Modeled after the traditional laser sword. A standard sword pommel projects a thin laser beam to a length of three feet. Penetrates all armor easily, but can be parried by a similar weapon. Inflicts 1D10 of damage.

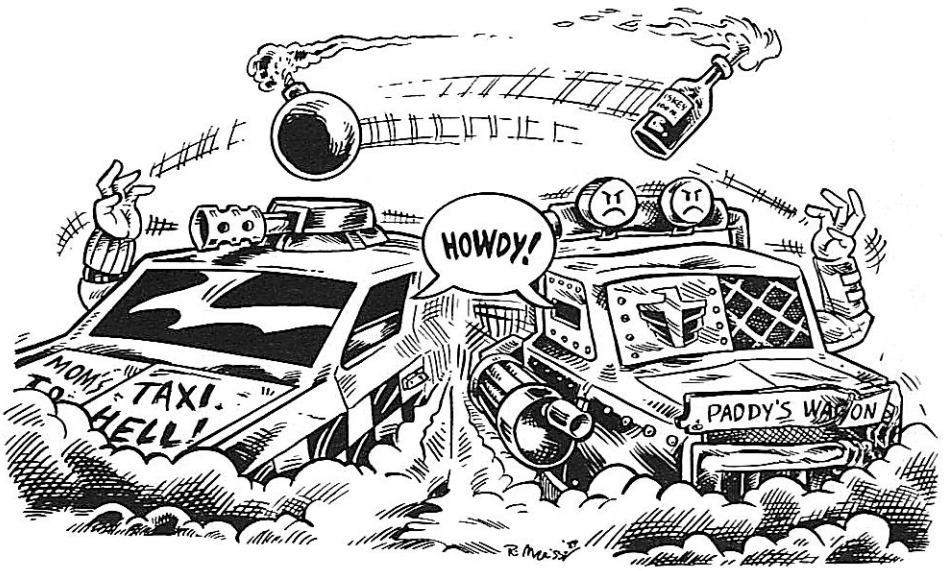
Stun Lance: A larger version of the stun dagger above. However, the lance is more powerful. With a solid hit with the tip, the stun effect penetrates all armor classes. As with the dagger, there is no physical damage. These lances are used frequently in jousts where the main purpose is not to cause injury.

Energy Lance: A version of the stun lance, except that this weapon is intended to cause true damage. Contact with the tip triggers a short pulse laser burst. The laser extends only 12 inches and lasts but a millisecond. This is still sufficient to burn through any armor and cause 1D12 of damage. These lances are carried onto the battlefields.

These are only a few high tech weapons that can fit into a fantasy campaign. You will be able to add many more as you consider the possibilities.

THE AADA SELF-QUIZ

by Timothy D. Jacques
(Lincoln Avengers)



So you think you're a real autoduelist, eh? We'll see about that. Take this quiz if you dare and add up the total points when you're done. Each question is multiple choice and you're given a certain amount of points depending on what answer you choose.

1. You're going into amateur night for the first time. As the gate opens and you drive out into the field, what thoughts first come into your mind?

a) I should have listened to Mom and been a plumber.

b) I hope I look good on camera.

c) Look out wall, here I come!

d) Look Ma, no brains!!!!

2. You see a hitchhiker on the interstate. You recognize the guy as the person who stole away your girlfriend. What do you do?

a) Give him a ride.

b) Say, "Have a nice walk!" and speed away.

c) Blow off his thumb as you pass by.

d) Tip off the local cycle gang of his location.

3. You see a road-killed animal on the side of the road. What's your reaction?

a) Poor little thing.

b) Yuch, what a mess.

c) Target practice.

d) Lunch!

4. How do you stop a biker gang from robbing you?

a) Bluff them with fake weapons.

b) Say that you have powerful friends in high places.

c) Say your dirt poor and have no valuables.

d) Say, "Ah-ha!! You fools, you fell right into my trap! Leave now and I'll spare your lives!!!"

5. What would be a perfect nickname for someone who uses Gold Cross often?

a) Re-run.

b) Test-tube Tom.

c) Joe Smith the 16th.

d) Bozo the clone.

6. How many BLUDs does it take to screw on a light bulb?

a) One.

b) BLUDs don't use light bulbs.

c) That's a stupid question.

d) Five. One to hold the light bulb and four to drive the trucks and push the house counter-clockwise!

7. A rogue duelist challenges you to a duel on the highway. He has a division 30 monster while you have a division 5 piece of trash. What do you do?

a) Accept the challenge like a true duelist.

b) Try to talk your way out.

c) Call for help. Even if it's EDSEL.

d) Offer your 16-year-old sister as a bribe to get away.

8. A real nasty and formidable toll gang has set up shop on a nearby road. The defenses are formidable and deadly. One day as you drive along the road the toll gang catches you with your guard down and surprises you. Your next action should be...

a) Go around.

b) Go through.

c. Plead for a free ride.

d) Ask if they except Master Card or VISA.

9. What role do pedestrian groups play in *Car Wars*?

a) They provide protection and safety for the people in their neighborhood.

b) They're a pain in the neck and cause trouble.

c) Target practice!

d) Make beautiful art blotches when they're hit by autocannons!!!

10. What are some vital items in a long distance road trip?

a) Extra ammo, medical kit, long range radio, spare tires, and radar.

b) Helpful advice from the locals.

c) Road atlas guides showing where all the pit stops are.

d) Carton of cigarettes, bottle of Jack Daniels, tape deck with very large speakers and heavy metal tapes, and the location of

every "all girls" college within a 200-mile radius!

11. The only good biker is a ...

a) Dead biker.

b) Biker that stays far, far away.

c) Biker that uses mouthwash.

d) Biker that gets robbed!

12. What's the last thing that crosses your mind when you're about to die in a road duel?

a) What, me worry?

b) That guy's good!

c) Clone time!

d) I wonder how big a stain I'll leave on the road?

13. A popular game show in 2038 is ...

a) *The Price is Right* — Where poor people bid for common items such as food, clothing, and medicine.

b) *Jeopardy Part 2* — In this game, the winner wins extravagant prizes. The losers ends up being indentured servants or end up as target practice in the arena.

c) *Family Fued* — Where hill clans slug it out on stage!

d) *Bowling for Peds* — This is where cars with metal ramplates "bowl over" pedestrians for points!

14. An autoduelist's greatest enemy is ...

a) BLUD.

b) ARF.

c) Corrupt mechanics.

d) Pinko, commie pacifists who want autodueling outlawed!!!

15. The red cross on the ambulance means...

a) Wounded people inside. Neutral vehicle.

b) Medics will help (for a price).

c) Stay out of the way or else!

d) Aiming at it gives a +2 to hit!

16. You smell a strange odor in your car during a duel. What do you say?

a) "My car's on fire!"

b) "No more Mexican food for me!"

c) "That's the last time I fight in a cow pasture!"

d) "Hey gunner, did you fart?"

17. What's the first thing you consider when it comes to buying a new car?

a) Price tag.

b) Weapons systems.

c) Is it made in America?

d) Where to put the fuzzy dice?

18. What's more dangerous?

a) Bubba the Biker.

b) Al the ARF.

c) Ernie the EDSEL.

d) Improved body armor that's several sizes too small in the shorts!

19. Real autoduelists ...

a) Finish the fight.

b) Are heros to their community.

c) Are party animals.

d) Don't eat quicke!

20. You're driving down a lonely road when suddenly a huge ancient red dragon appears in front of you. What do you do?

a) Yell, "HOLY #$%^&*!!!!"

b) Breath a sigh of relief since you got that fireproof armor.

c) Look at the referee and shout, "Wrong game system!!!"

d) Wonder what the target modifiers are.

Point System

If you pick "a" ... 1 pt.
If you pick "b" ... 2 pts.
If you pick "c" ... 3 pts.
If you pick "d" ... 4 pts.

Point Totals

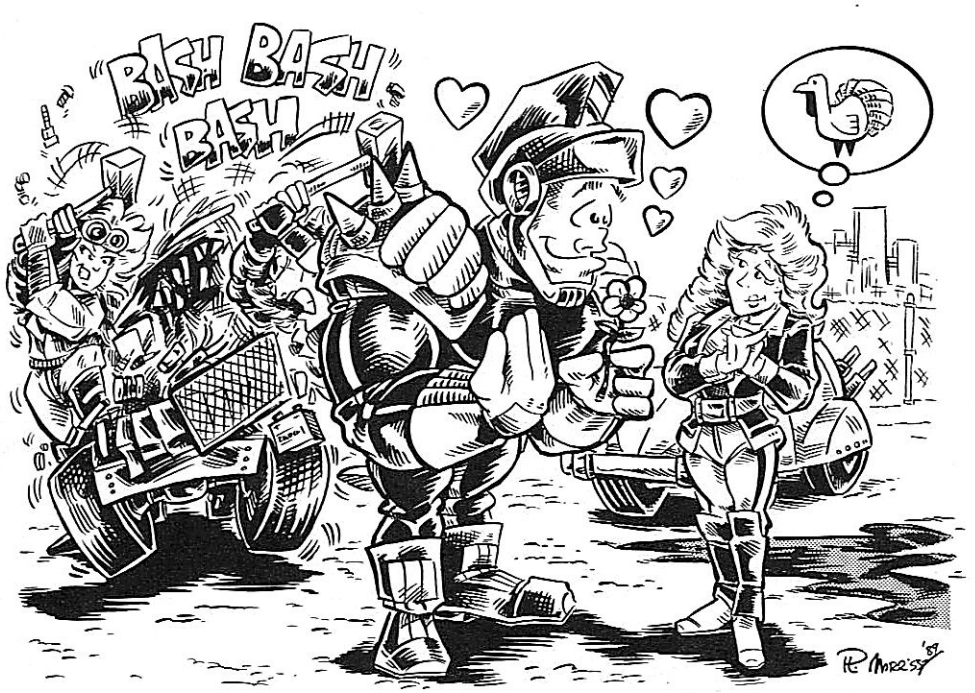
20-35 ... You are very conservative and mild. What the hell are you doing on the road!

36-55 ... A beginner who needs more experience. Keep at it and you'll go far!

56-70 ... You're an everyday duelist who likes a good fight. Drive offensively!

71-79 ... A true duelist at heart. You're the envy of every child.

80 ..... Your the "duelist's duelist" and have a definite sense of humor. Has anyone suggested you to the Hall of Fame?



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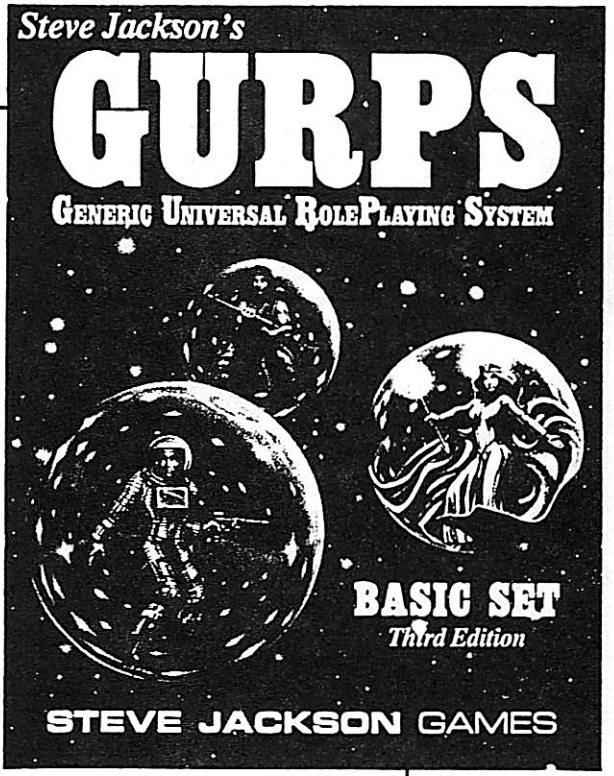
SPACE 1889
WE'RE TOO LATE FOOLS!
DRAT!
WHAT!
THEY'VE TAKEN MISS MOLLY ON THAT SKY GALLEON!!
HELP! HELP!
HMMN...
PSST!... CHARLY YOU GOT THAT LOGO STUCK ON YOUR CAP!
OH CRIPES...
HEY WAIT! WE CAN TAKE MY FLYER LEFT-ENANT, IT CAN CATCH THEM!
JUST WHAT IN THE HELL IS THIS!
A JAPANESE SUBCOMPACT SKY SKIFF I PICKED UP NEAR EUXINIOUS LACUS.
DON'T WORRY, IT'S FAST!!
THIS SUCKER PACKS 8 H.P. WITH A FOUR PADDLE OVER-DRIVE!
EIGHT HORSE POWER! AND NO TURNCRANKS OR STEAM! PREPOSTEROUS!! IMPOSSIBLE!
ACTUALLY, IT'S EIGHT HOBBIT POWER. THE LITTLE BEGGARS OWED ME FROM A FEW YEARS BACK!
HOBBITS?
HI THERE!
HOB... HOBBITS!! NOW HOLD IT!!
C-89
J.D.W.
THIS IS SPACE 1889! THIS IS RESPECTABLE ROLE-PLAYING!... YOU KNOW, ZULUS, PUNJABS, THE BRITISH EMPIRE! NOT SOME WITLESS FANTASY WITH...
FLYING SHIPS, BIG-EARED MARTIANS, MIND CONTROL RAY GUNS, DINOSAURS, PEOPLE EATING PLANTS ETC.
OH... RIGHT, GUESS I LOST MY HEAD!
WUFFLE WUFFLE WUFFLE
QUITE ALL RIGHT SIR! AS SOON AS FRED AND CHARLY CATCH UP WITH SOME FIREPOWER, WE'LL FORCE THAT GALLEON DOWN AND SAVE MISS MOLLY!
NEXT: SKY BATTLES! YAAHG!

GURPS



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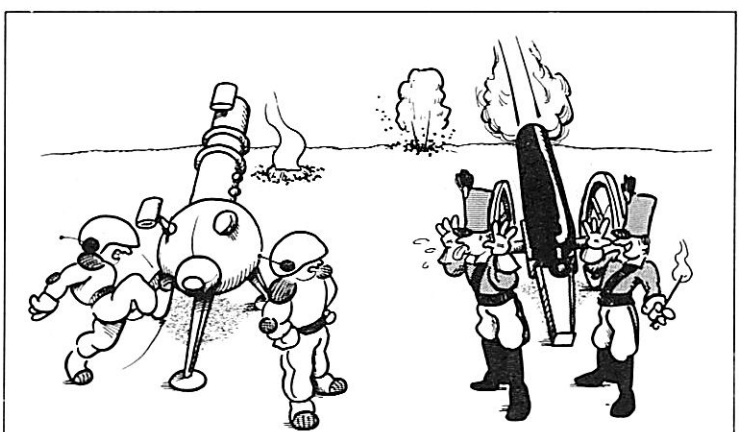

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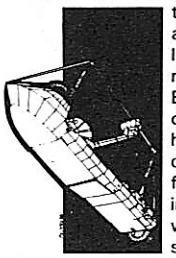

that the latter devised a practical use for the luminiferous ether. Its nature suggested to Edison a device which could "sail at speeds heretofore undreamed of through the luminiferous ether." It was, in fact, a quirk of fate which forced his first such invention to fail—his prototype could not overcome the atmosphere—forcing Edison to set his sights toward the airless heavens. The space age had begun.

Edison himself made the first manned voyage in an ether flyer of his own invention, accompanied by Jack Armstrong, a Scottish soldier of fortune. The two managed to pilot their craft via hydrogen balloon high enough to allow their ether propeller to take hold. Unfortunately, their landing on Mars was not as smooth, and the balloon was damaged. The expedition would have been stranded forever were it not for the fact that the planet was inhabited.

Edison and Armstrong were taken prisoner by a local Martian potentate, Amraamtaba IX. Armstrong learned the

language, and Edison impressed the ruler with his tremendous knowledge. The pair were soon freed, and Edison was provided with the materials necessary to repair his balloon. Within months the repaired flyer was ready to carry Edison, Armstrong, and a curious Martian back to Earth. The expedition landed safely outside Cincinnati on the 7th of August, 1870.

Earth was electrified. Edison and Armstrong received fame and fortune. Within a year, dozens of companies were manufacturing Edison Flyers, and flyers of several nationalities were soon making regular trips to Mars. The British established a permanent quarter in the Martian city of Parhoon. Belgians and French quickly followed suit, establishing themselves as colonial powers. The Germans turned their attentions to Venus, a world covered with harsh swamps and inhabited by ferocious dinosaurs. Edison had opened a cornucopia of worlds and markets for the colonial powers of the Earth, the backdrop for the adventures of a lifetime—**Space: 1889**!

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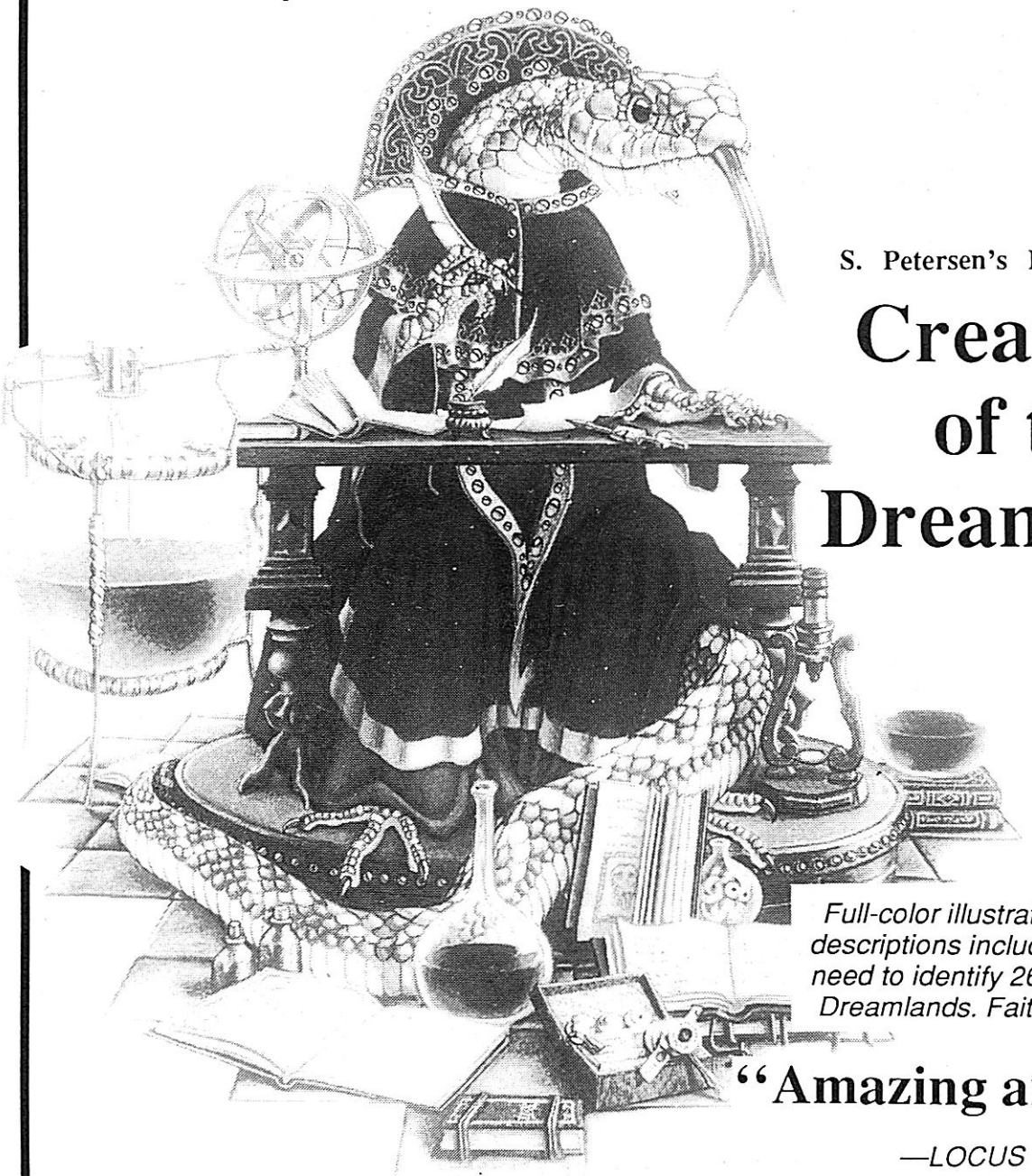

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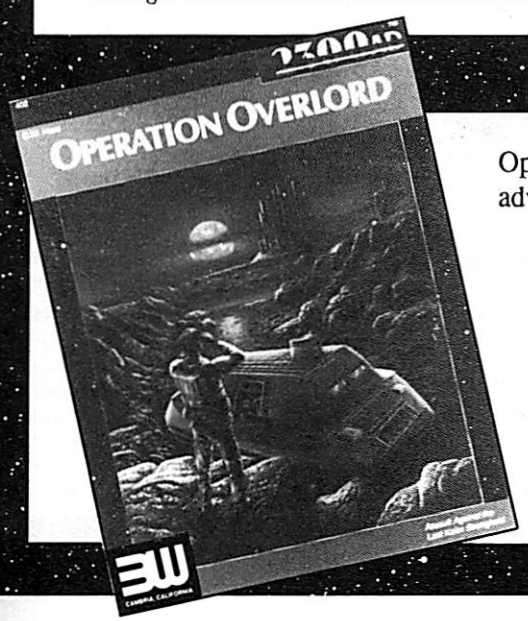

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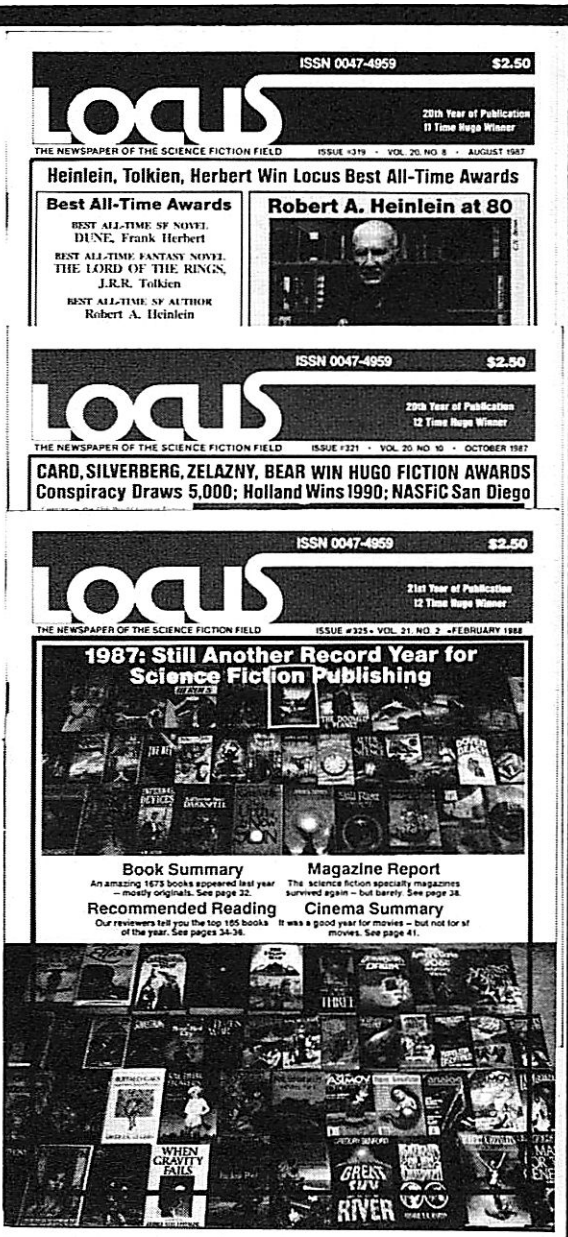
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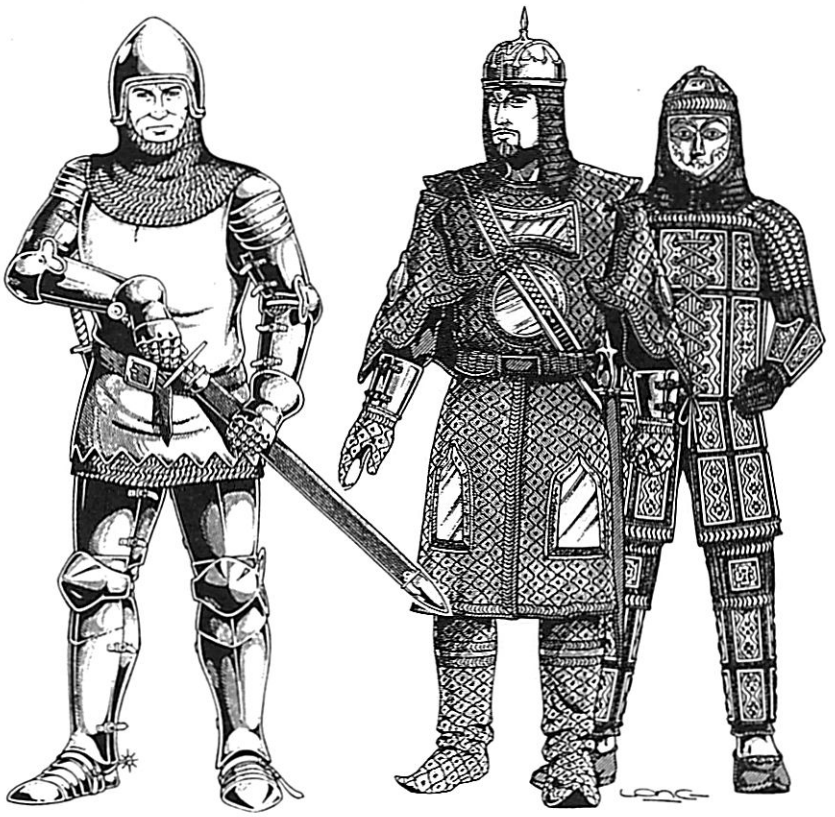

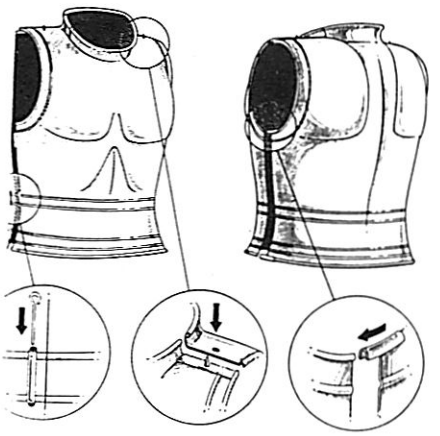

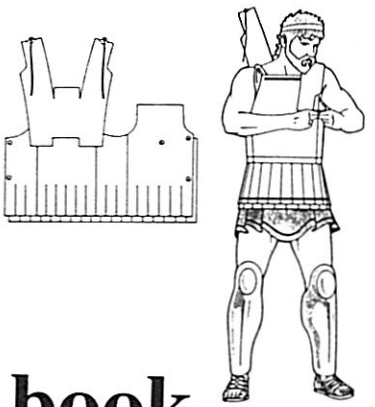

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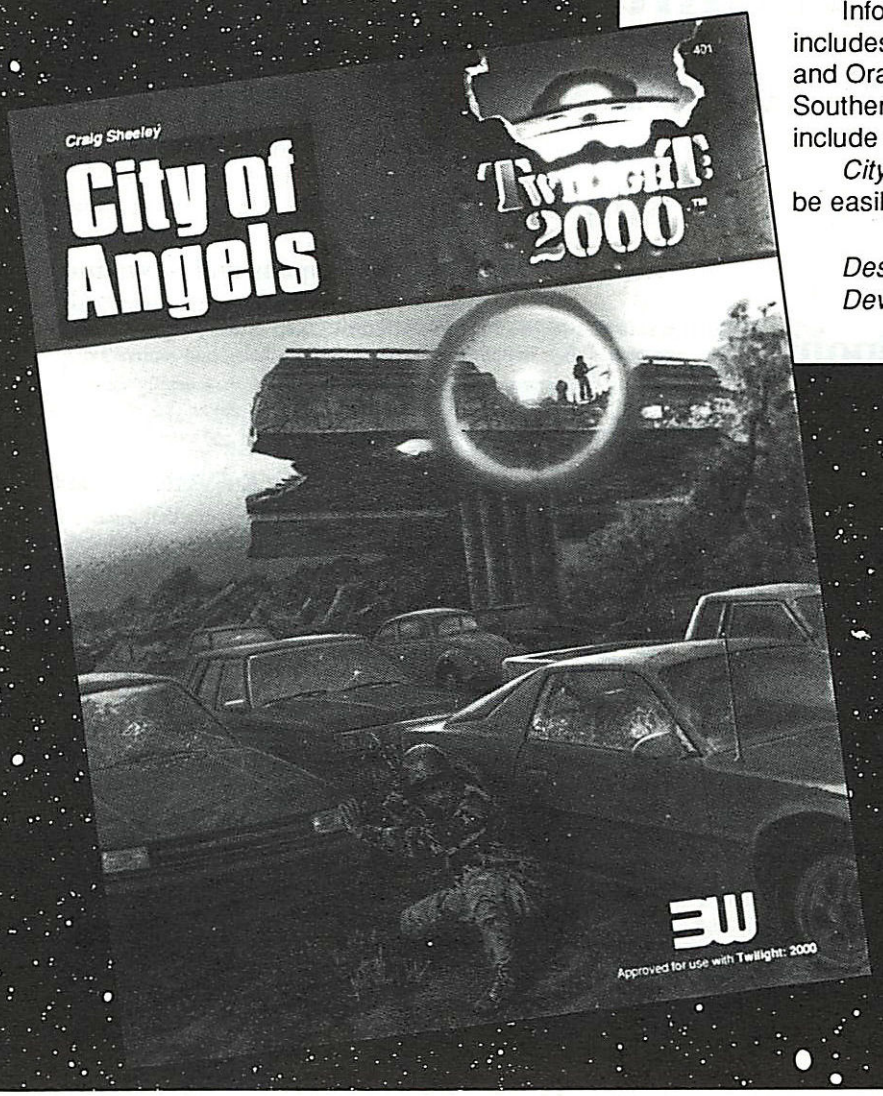
City of Angels is a module for use with GDW's World War III role-playing game, **Twilight: 2000**. The adventure takes place near the blasted ruins of the Los Angeles area of Southern California. The story revolves around the obligation of one of the players to an old commanding officer. Living up to his promise thrusts him, along with his companions, into a journey through the hardest hit areas of the nuclear exchange of World War III. The group must contend with all the harsh realities of post-holocaust life, complicated by rival gangs warring over territories in what was once known as the *City of Angels.*

Information presented in this module includes source material and maps for the L.A. and Orange County areas, an overview of Southern California, and optional rules which include civilian character generation.

City of Angels can be run on its own, or can be easily adapted to fit an existing campaign.

Design: Craig Sheeley
Development: Craig Sheeley, Jay Adan



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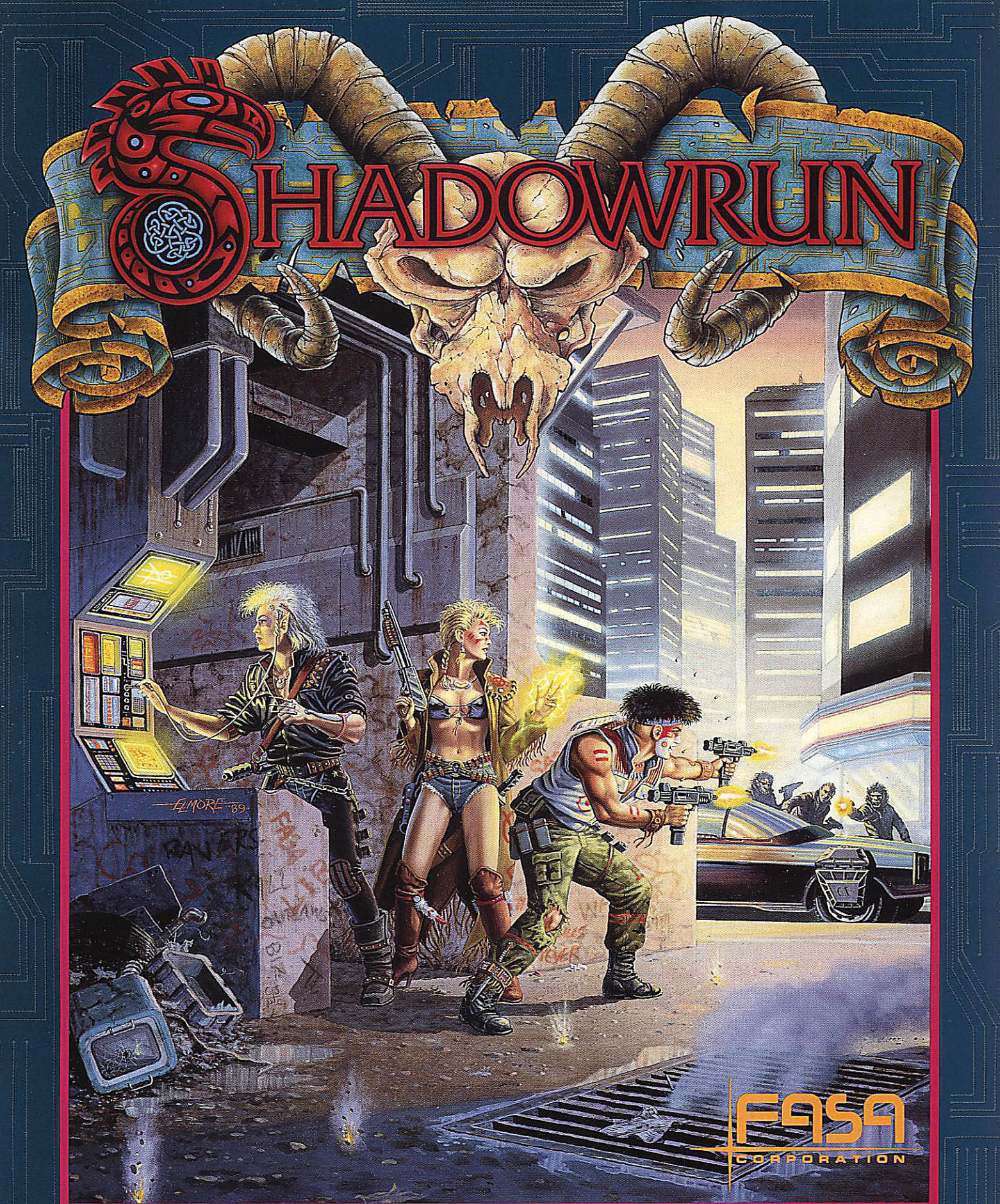

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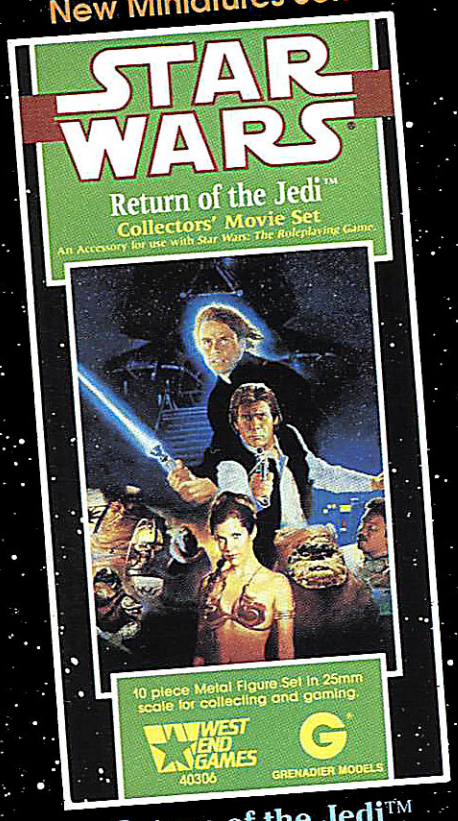
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